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Voter info available online

Lengthy voter's pamphlet is placed on the Web in hopes of increasing accessibility and voter participation

By Andrew Adams
Oregon Daily Emerald

To help Oregon residents get a head start on reading this year's general election voter's pamphlet, which will surpass many Oregon phone books in size, the secretary of state's office posted all the material on the Internet this week.

Hard copies of the pamphlet are due to be mailed Oct. 11, and the secretary of state's office hopes the

early Internet release will give voters more time to study election issues.

Only information on the state measures is available at the site right now, but the office plans to add the candidate information

when the print copy of the voter's guide is released on Oct. 18.

The pamphlet, at www.oregonvotes.com, will spare voters the task of thumbing through the 376-page printed voter's pamphlet, to be mailed out on Oct. 11, said Paddy McGuire, chief of staff for the secretary of state's office.

"It's about as long as the Eugene-Springfield white pages, and it's the first voter's pamphlet to be bound like a phone book," he said.

McGuire said the pamphlet was placed online because of its size and to inform voters living outside the state.

"On the very first day the site was up, we received an e-mail from an Oregonian living in Scotland who found a problem with one of the site's links," McGuire said. "That's pretty instantaneous results that folks all over the globe are using it." McGuire added that the problem was quickly solved.

Every registered voter will still be receiving a copy of the voter's guide, so there won't be any reduced cost from posting the pamphlet on the Internet. But McGuire said the secretary of state's office received non-profit bulk rate postage from the post office and will save money through that reduced rate. He said the state saved

approximately \$700,000 through the rate, which reduced mailing costs from \$1.2 million to about \$450,000.

Annette Newingham, Lane County elections manager, said the information online will help voters understand the issues, but couldn't say whether or not that will improve voter turnout.

"I'm not really sure if that's going to be a factor," she said.

Information on the two Lane County bond measures — 20-38 and 20-39 for a forest work camp for minor offenders and jail improvements — is available at the Lane County Web site: www.co.lane.or.us.

Brian Tanner, the state affairs coordinator for the ASUO, said the Web site should help students find voter information. He added that the ASUO will be putting together its own guide about measures that will have a direct effect on higher education; as for other state measures, the Web site would be a better source than the bulky pamphlet.

"I don't think any student in their right mind with all the other reading they have to do anyway would look through [the voter's pamphlet]," he said.





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Citizen input needed for TransPlan

City planners are requesting information from Eugene residents regarding their uses of automobiles, as well as alternative transit methods for an area transportation plan

By Erin Zysset
For the Emerald

Community members have the opportunity, through Oct. 6, to tell city planners exactly what standards should be used to measure TransPlan's effectiveness in reducing dependency on automobiles.

TransPlan is the city's 20-year public transportation plan, which has been in the development stage for seven years. The standards TransPlan officials adopt will gauge the city's success in reducing the use of single-occupancy vehicles and promoting alternative transportation, such as buses, bicycles and carpools.

The state has another standard — miles traveled in cars per capita — but the TransPlan standards will be more complex. The standards include the increased percentages per capita of non-automobile trips, households with access to rapid bus transit systems, miles of rapid transit bus routes, acres of bike paths, and development in densely populated communities.

"What we are asking the public is whether or not they think these standards go far enough and whether they feel the measures are realistic," said Lee Shoemaker, a senior project member for TransPlan. "The state has a regulation that we reduce vehicle miles traveled by five percent. We believe that this plan will keep vehicle miles traveled flat, while increasing the availability of alternative forms of transportation."

In order for TransPlan's alternative measures to be affirmed, state and local officials must approve them.

"The state is certainly going to hold our feet over the fire to make sure we are tracking our progress," said Peter Watt, a TransPlan committee member. "My feeling is that we've done a good job of coming up with alternative measures, and the state will see that we have made a sincere effort to come up with alternative ways to track progress. I think the measures will pass."

“What we are asking the public is whether or not they think these standards go far enough and whether they feel the measures are realistic.”

Lee Shoemaker
Senior project member
TransPlan

According to Watt and Shoemaker, there hasn't been much public response to the measures. People have shown more interest in TransPlan itself than in how the city will track its effectiveness, they said.

"I think that these measures seem pretty effective because it looks at other ways of getting around — not just one thing," said University student Alicia Lorenzetti. "Also, checking to see how many cars are left at home because people have another way; basically seeing how many people don't have another way to get around."

Comments on the alternative plan performance measures must be submitted in writing. For more information call Shoemaker at 682-4355 or e-mail him at Ishoemaker@lane.cog.or.us.

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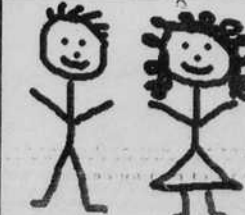
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