Oregon wants to add its 'no calls' to federal list

Attorney General Hardy Myers recently announced another round of action taken against violators of Oregon's Do Not Call Law and welcomed the official implementation of a National Do Not Call Registry by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

"A National Do Not Call Registry gives Oregon consumers an additional tool to fight annoying telemarketing calls to their homes," Myers said. "More than 174,000 Oregonians are currently protected on the Oregon No Call List and, if we are able to interact with the National Registry, that protection could double."

The Oregon Legislature is currently considering a bill that will amend Oregon's current Don Not Call Law to designate the National Do Not Call Registry to serve as the state's list (HB 3329). Passage of the legislation allows the state's list to be merged with the national list. If the Attorney General is authorized by the Legislature to merge the lists, current Oregon No Call List subscribers would automatically be registered on the national list.

"The pending legislation is critical for Oregonians who wish to halt unwanted telephone solicitation," Myers explained. "If passed, it will offer consumers the protections of both federal and state law at absolutely no charge."

Consumers who have not registered with the state No Call List and want to place their home or cellular numbers on the National Registry may do it online at DONOTCALL.GOV or by telephone at 1-888-382-1222. Consumers must call from the phone number they wish to register. Registration is free.

Federal enforcement of the National Do Not Call Registry begins Oct. 1, 2003. All consumers whose number are on the registry by August 31, 2003 are expected to notice a downturn in telemarketing calls starting in October.

Consumers who register after Sept. 1, 2003, should notice a drop in telemarketing calls within three months of the date they register.

Study finds middle ground needed in forest thinning

By 'ARIZONA TRIBUNE'

A U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) study of forest-thinning projects contested by environmental groups sheds new light on the war of words being waged over forest management.

The study, as reported by the "Tribune's" Mark Flatten recently, found that most forest-thinning projects go unchallenged. The Southwest Forest Alliance, Sierra Club and Center for Biological Diversity immediately issued a joint press release touting that fact. But that wasn't the GAO's only finding, by a long shot.

The study determined that the projects that are unchallenged less often tend to be relatively small controlled burns and thinning of small-diameter trees near populated areas -- projects that the environmental groups have said they support. Many of these projects also are exempt from administrative appeals. Interestingly, though, about half of the projects near urban areas that are not exempt from appeals end up being challenged.

Most telling of the GAO study's findings is that nearly 60 percent of larger thinning projects deeper within forests, many of which involve commercial timber sales, are contested by environmental groups. The Sierra Club and Center for Biological Diversity, along with several others that have litigated heavily against projects that involve timber sales, have made it clear that since last summer's devastating wildfire season that the only projects they will tolerate are those near populated areas that do not involve logging companies.

They have also made it a point to remind us that forest fires are "natural" occurrences, and that forests generally should be left alone. Fortunately, there is a reasonable, environmentally responsible middle ground between their position of letting the forests burn or letting logging companies clear-cut them. That position has been painstakingly researched and tested by forestry experts, including Wally Covington at Northern Arizona University's School of Forestry.

That middle ground involves active, science-based management of our national forests that balances ecology, safety and economics. Yes, there will always be "natural" forest fires, many sparked by a combination of overgrowth, dry conditions and lightning. And forests in designated wilderness areas should go untouched by humans. But humans also are part of Nature, and expecting all publicly held forests to be off-limits to any kind of human intervention is unnecessary, impractical and -- yes -- even unnatural. Forests enrich all living things -- animals and humans.

As long as we enjoy the aesthetic, recreational and economic benefits of forests without destroying or degrading them, there is no reason for the kind of outcry we have heard for the past decade from radical environmental groups that reject any human intervention as unnatural and destructive. Finally, there is no way to affordably thin our vast national forests without involvement by the forest industry.

There is only so much tax money available to conduct the limited thinning projects that environmental extremists will tolerate. A reasonable, balanced approach to forest management, as espoused by Covington and contained in the Healthy Forest Restoration Act now before Congress, would substantially reduce wildfire conditions, result in healthier stands of trees in treated areas, provide jobs and economic benefits through forest industries, and save untold tax dollars in non-commercial thinning projects and firefighting.

This is the middle ground that, had it been in place in recent years, almost certainly would have spared Arizona and the West last year''s devastating wildfires. It is a middle ground that our governor and congressional delegates should wholeheartedly support, and it should be adopted by the entire Congress.

We must not allow extremism to deal us and our precious forests another such horrendous blow.

Ore. schools receive boost

At the end of June, the State Land Board distributed nearly $7.3 million from earnings of the Common School Fund (CSF) for use by K-12 public schools.

The board distributed $25 million from the CSF for schools in December, which included a special $17.7 million one-time supplemental distribution ordered by the legislature in its third 2002 special session.

By law, the funds are dedicated to "support and maintenance of common schools in each school district."

County populations ages 4-20 determine each county's share of earnings.

Annual distributions in recent years have fluctuated from $9 million to $40.8 million depending on board policies and market conditions.

The value of the Common School Fund totaled $694 million at the end of May 2003.

Lt. Harman honored for police work

Sheriff David H. Daniel recently announced that Lt. Lee Harman has been honored by the Oregon State Grange as "Police Officer of the Year," in a meeting of the State Grange on Friday, June 27.

Lt. Harman was given a plaque and honored for his many years of service to the citizens of Josephine County and his work as the Emergency Services Commander during the Biscuit Fire.

The Illinois Valley Grange nominated Lt. Harman for the award, and the state Grange chose him for the award out of several other nominations throughout the state.

Motorcyclist dies in crash

A motorcyclist died Thursday, July 3 at 7:50 p.m. on Highway 99 at Sage Road.

Kenneth Vaughan, 47, of Medford died when he crashed his Harley Davidson motorcycle.

An investigation by the Oregon State Police determined that he attempted to pass a semi on the right side illegally. His path of travel took him over the center median where he collided with a road sign and was thrown from his bike.

He was transported to Rogue Valley Medical Center where he died a short time later. The investigation is ongoing but alcohol was a factor, according to OSP.

Medford Police Department, Central Point Police Department, ODOT and Mercy Flights assisted OSP.

SELMA FIRE- Robert Rosenberg of Selma accidentally sparked a 5-acre fire on Tuesday, July 1. The fire was started by his tractor and burned 4 acres of hay and 1 acre of trees. Four brush rigs, one fire engine and three water tenders responded to the scene to quench the flames. (Photos by CR the PR)

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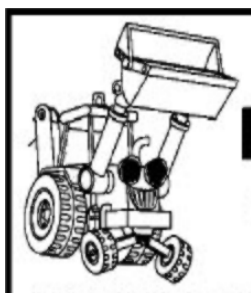

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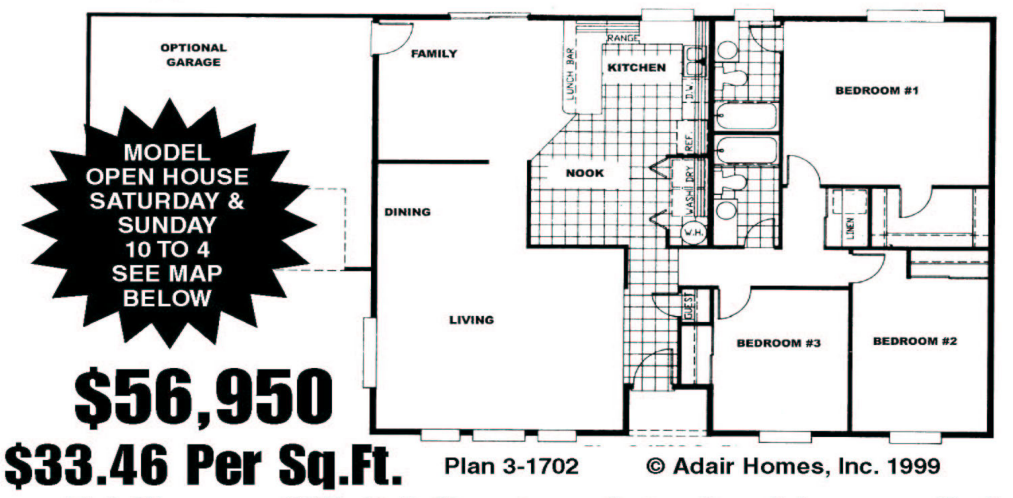

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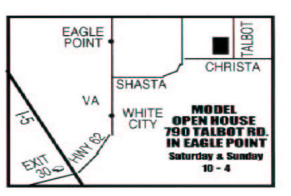
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