



SUCCESSFUL TOY RUN - I.V. bikers sponsored the 22nd annual Toy Run Saturday, Nov. 27 based at the Junction Inn. The run attracted more than 80 bikers plus others from the community. There were 54 riders in the run itself. Dave Casper and his one-man band played rock 'n' roll music in the Timber Room for the event. Toys from the run will be given away on Christmas Eve at the Illinois Valley Family Coalition Center on E. River Street. (Photos by Tina Haemmerlein)



Fewer folks facing hunger, says USDA

Data from the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) indicate that Oregon's hunger rate has improved since the mid-1990s.

However, Oregon's hunger and food insecurity rates remain significantly higher than national rates.

During the 2001-03 period, 4.3 percent of Oregon households included someone who went hungry at times during the year. This is an improvement from 6.0 percent in 1996-98, but still higher than the national rate of 3.4 percent, said ODA.

"Those fighting hunger in Oregon deserve credit for improving Oregon's hunger rate, primarily by increasing access to food stamps," said Michael Leachman, policy analyst for the Oregon Center for Public Policy.

At the urging of advocacy groups, Oregon's Dept. of Human Services increased the income limit for accessing food stamps in 2000 and changed the rules to allow recipients to own a reliable car. An outreach effort, led by the Oregon Hunger Relief Task Force, subsequently increased participation among eligible

families.

"The improvement in hunger shows that government programs work when they have enough resources," said Leachman. "By increasing access to food stamps across Oregon, we've made a significant dent in Oregon's hunger problem."

Leachman noted that food stamps are almost entirely paid for by the federal government, and therefore have not been subject to the state budget cuts that have diminished other programs.

Leachman emphasized that Oregon has been improving access to food assistance at the same time that the state has been cutting access to the Oregon Health Plan and child-care subsidies.

"We have made it easier for families to get food at the same time we've made it more difficult for them to get medical assistance or

child care," said Leachman. "Our gains against hunger may be offset in the longer term by backsliding in other areas."

Leachman also pointed out that some of the improvement in Oregon's hunger rate is likely due to a change in the national hunger survey, rather than to actual improvement in the lives of Oregonians. Since 2001, the national survey has been conducted in early December. Previously, the survey was conducted in April, August or September.

Research by USDA has found seasonal variations in hunger rates nationally, depending on when the survey is conducted.

"Early December may be a relatively good time for hunger in Oregon," said Leachman. "Holiday and other seasonal jobs haven't yet disappeared, and school is still in session, so lunch programs are available."

Child safety restraints work well

A new study of car crashes involving passengers younger than 9 shows that the use of child safety restraints, such as child safety seats and belt positioning booster seats, has increased sharply in only five years.

During this same period, the federal government traced a decline in the number of children who died in vehicle crashes.

The study was conducted by Partners for Child Passenger Safety (PCPS), a joint effort between State Farm Insurance and the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, and the University of Pennsylvania. PCPS analyzed more than 11,000 crashes reported to State Farm and found that child safety restraint use increased from 49 percent in 1999 to 65 percent in 2003.

Increases in child restraint use across all age groups older than 2 are the result of public awareness campaigns and the enactment of booster seat laws.

Previous research from PCPS found significant safety benefits for children between 4 and 8 years who used belt-positioning booster seats rather than seat belts alone.

For more information about PCPS, child safety seats and belt-positioning booster seats, visit www.farm.com or www.chop.edu/carseat.

Moisture tips

The Environmental Protection Agency offers the following tips to reduce moisture problems before they become mold problems:

*Fix leaks and seepage as soon as possible.

*Watch for condensation and wet spots, and fix the source of the problem immediately.

*Vent appliances, such as dryers, to the outside.

*Don't let foundations stay wet. Provide drainage and slope the ground away from the foundation.

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2004 I.V. graduate Shawn Eric Campbell graduated recruit training from the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego, California on 19 Nov. and officially earned the title United States Marine. Private Campbell will enjoy spending the holiday at home before going to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina for follow-up training.



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