

## Small towns can have big problems

The following is a summary of problems discussed at a conference held this past summer on small cities sponsored by the Columbia Region Association of Governments (CRAG).

Small cities in the Portland metropolitan area have their own particular problems, not the least of which is the misconception that just because a city is small, so must be its problems.

In fact, according to a number of small-city officials here, their jurisdictions are encountering many of the same problems as their larger counterparts — but small cities don't always have manpower or resources to adequately confront the problems.

This was a recurring theme voiced by several officials during the "Small Cities Workshop" sponsored by the Columbia Region Association of Governments (CRAG) this summer, where a number of small-city officials offered their perspectives to each other and to a delegation of state and federal officials.

The dialogue between these officials was deemed successful, and plans now are being formulated by CRAG to sponsor upcoming workshops focusing on grant-related issues, as grants appear to be a viable method of helping small cities solve some of their difficulties.

The problems of small cities — defined as having populations of 10,000 or less — are not limited to obvious fiscal constraints and service demands, but also concern spreading their small staffs to accommodate growing bureaucratic requirements.

Obtaining federal grants is a key example. A prevalent problem noted by this region's small-city officials is that they have difficulty hiring people with wide

knowledge of grants and having expertise in applying for them. And if a city is fortunate enough to obtain a grant to fund a program, it often lacks the capacity to manage it. This area is particularly crucial because grants are rapidly becoming a mainstay in the fiscal operations of many small cities.

### Personnel Problems

Personnel matters present another wide-ranging problem. Officials said their small cities are investing money to train employees for various specialized governmental functions, only to eventually lose the employees to larger cities that can lure the employees with higher salaries than can be afforded by the small cities. This creates a situation where the small cities are becoming "training grounds" for larger-city staffs, they said.

Plumbing inspectors were cited as a specific example. The state requires that a plumbing inspector have more credentials than either building or electrical inspectors, which means these plumbing inspectors demand higher wages than the small city can budget.

Also, the small-city officials said, the cost of insuring employees is approaching prohibitive levels for many small jurisdictions, and they are having trouble paying employees for vacations and leaves of absence for military duty.

Because of increasing demands for specialization and the difficulty in hiring full-time employees for these duties, many small cities now are relying increasingly on consultants. Small-city officials in this region testified to having both good and bad experiences with consultants, but agreed that

they often do not have time or staff to compile a list of available consultants, to check references on them, or to work with the hired consultant to ensure that he or she has a thorough understanding of the particular city and its problems.

### CETA Programs

The Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) was cited by several officials as a workable program with which small cities can expand their services in rapidly growing communities, but they urged that CETA not be used to simply provide ongoing services that the cities themselves should be providing.

Citizen involvement was labeled by the officials to be essential to the success of many programs, with the consensus being that when the city's residents were brought into the workings of government, the acceptance and understanding of the city's programs rose dramatically.

From a different angle, several officials urged that their small cities collectively become more involved with policy setting agencies affecting the operation of local governments, so that these larger agencies are fully apprised of situations encountered by small cities. It was pointed out during the workshop that while most cities of under 10,000 population have their particular types of problems, much legislation tends to lump them with cities of 25,000 or greater population, which can be counterproductive.

(Transcripts of the Small Cities Workshop sponsored

by CRAG can be obtained through the agency's Local Government Assistance program, headed by Marilyn Holstrom.)

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## CB'ers set breakfast

The San-Cada CB'ers' October "break" will be held Saturday, Oct. 14 at 9 a.m. at the Timbertown Cafe, across from the junior high school on Main Street in Estacada.

A family-style breakfast with pancakes, scrambled eggs, sausage, juice and coffee will be served. Two raffles will be held—for

adults and children,—and the monthly "bucket mouth" award will be given.

The event is open to anyone interested in CB matters. For more information call Fran Harrington at 637-3498 or Barry Fretz at 668-7028.

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## Mime's the word

DEBBIE BARRETT hams it up for the visitors to the Sandy High open house Tuesday night. Barrett was part of a group of students putting on a mime demonstration as part of a school non-verbal communication project.

Mark Floyd photo

## Preview of Oregon college programs offered to parents

Parents of high school students are invited to attend a visitation program by representatives from the Oregon state colleges and universities at Sandy Union High School on Tuesday, Oct. 24, at 8:45 a.m.

The program is an opportunity for interested students and parents to receive first-hand information about course offerings, admission requirements, housing, costs of attendance, financial aid, scholarships, and other information needed in planning for college.

Information will be

presented about Eastern Oregon State College, Oregon College of Education, Oregon Institute of Technology, Oregon State University, Portland State University, Southern Oregon State College, and the University of Oregon.

The Oregon State System of Higher Education visitation program, now in its 46th year, involves almost all public and private high schools in the state. The program's goal is to stimulate post-high school planning by students and provide them with an introduction to the programs

and services of the state colleges and universities. Parents are urged to discuss post-high school Institute of Technology, daughters before and after the visitation program.

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## CPO groups to meet

Leaders of Clackamas County's 30 Community Planning Organizations (CPOs) will meet at 7:30 p.m., Wednesday, Oct. 18, to share ideas and discuss how to be more involved in land use projects.

The meeting at the Department of Environmental Services offices on Abernathy, will be the first county-wide gathering of citizen leaders in more than a year, according to Ardis Stevenson, coordinator of the

citizen involvement program.

Items to be discussed include: (1) county assistance to CPOs (maps, reports, printing and mailing assistance); (2) CPO involvement in major planning projects (area zoning for Mt. Hood and rural areas, plan amendments on housing, commercial needs, density); and (3) common CPO concerns such as increasing participation or testifying to the planning commission.

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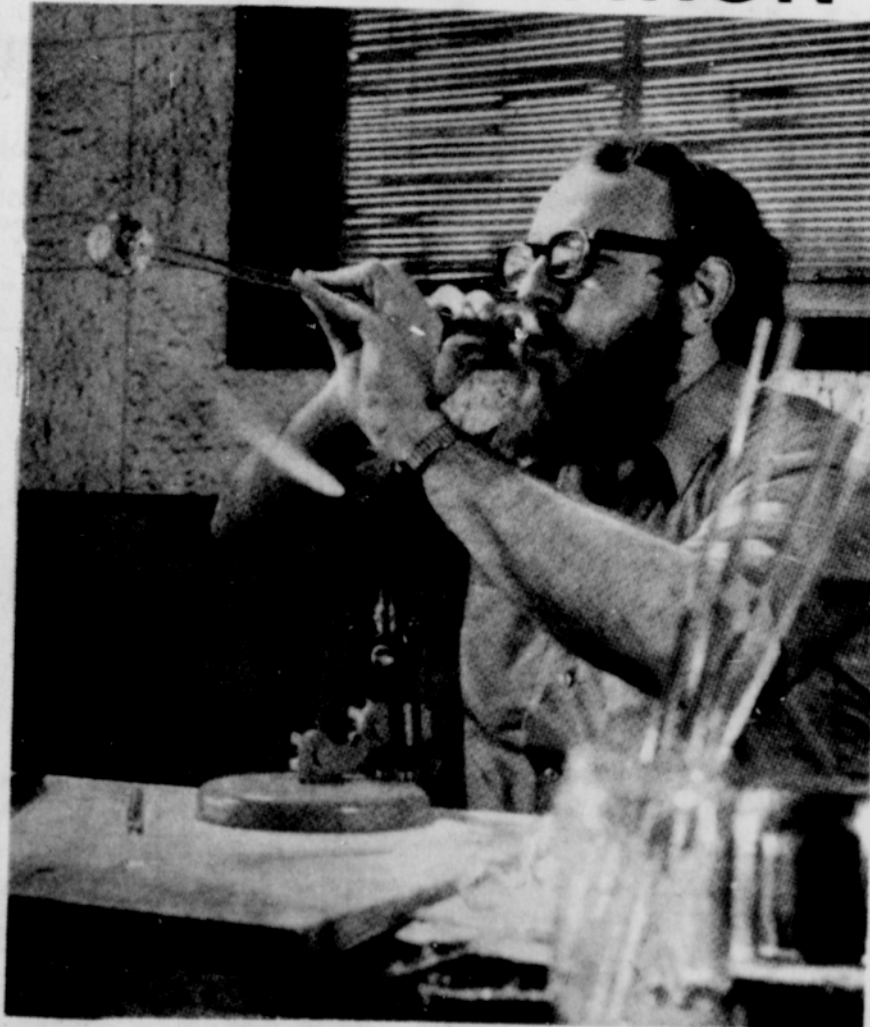
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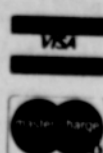
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