

Eugene-Springfield metro area to be ranked fifth worst in the nation in the American Lung Association's State of the Air 2005 report — and 1999 EPA data showing dangerously high levels of arsenic compounds in the air over west Springfield.

New information might help residents breathe easier.

The short-term particle pollution ranking was largely due to wood-burning smoke from Oakridge rather than Eugene-Springfield. Lane Regional Air Pollution Authority (LRAPA) data show that the air was hazardous or unhealthy for sensitive groups to breathe for 69 days — an average of 23 days per year — between 2001 and 2003, the years reflected in the State of the Air 2005 report. But 55 of those poor air quality days were in Oakridge, largely due to wood burning during temperature inversions, when cold air traps polluted hot air close to the ground. Oakridge's pollution skewed Eugene-

Springfield's rank on ALA's report, said LRAPA spokesperson Kim Metzler.

ALA's State of the Air 2006 report, to be released on April 27, will reflect a steady improvement in Lane County's air quality from 2002 to 2004. According to LRAPA air monitoring data, there were 40 unhealthy and hazardous air quality days in Oakridge and seven in Eugene-Springfield between 2002 and 2004, averaging 16 days of poor air quality per year — a 30 percent reduction from the 2005 figure. That may be enough to knock Eugene-Springfield off of ALA's State of the Air 2006 worst-cities list for short-term particle pollution. 2004 was the best year on recent record, with 10 poor air quality days, all of them in Oakridge.

EW's March 30 news story also mentioned EPA National Air Toxics Assessment data showing high levels of arsenic compound pollution over west Springfield. At the time, Metzler said that LRAPA didn't know

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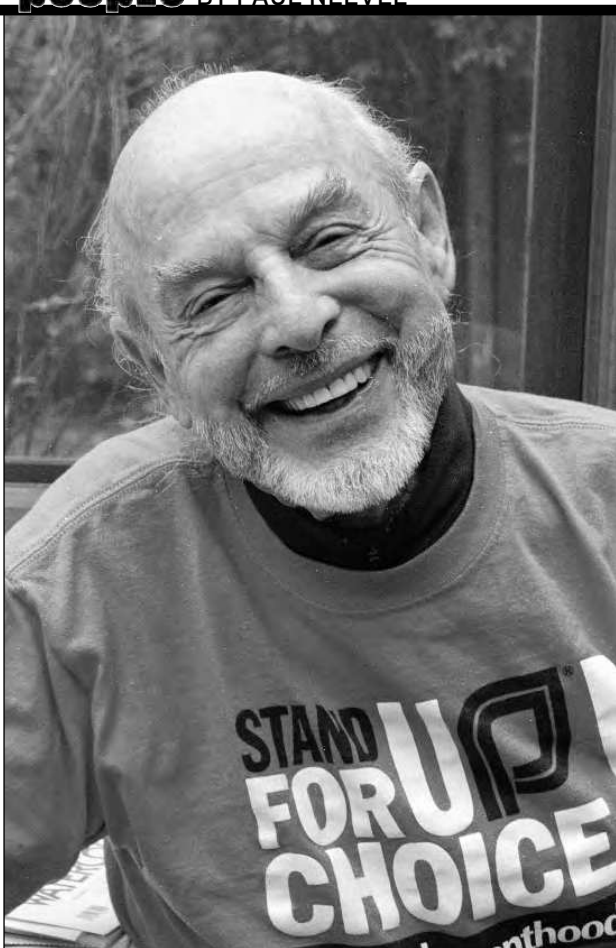
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Happening people BY PAUL NEEVEL

OLIVER SORENSON

On summer vacation from Hollywood High in the 1940s, Oliver Sorenson visited an uncle in Washington state. "He had the only house on Lake Samish," Sorenson recalls. "I told myself, 'I've gotta come back here.'" Eventually Sorenson did move north, to Beaverton, and worked for the Oregon Department of Justice. He also earned degrees in social work and counseling in night school at Portland State, moved to Eugene in '73, and counseled juvenile offenders for the county until his retirement in '85. Since then he has often traveled abroad, lived out of a backpack, and stayed at youth hostels. "My last trip was bicycling in Cuba in 2004," he says. "At 76 I don't travel as much." For the past three years, Sorenson has volunteered several times a month for Planned Parenthood. "He's our most active volunteer," says public affairs organizer Emily Alvarado. "He's at every event." Sorenson is gearing up to campaign against a parental-notification initiative on the fall ballot. "We just did a table at the UO Bookstore," he says. "We're trying to maintain women's right to choose."



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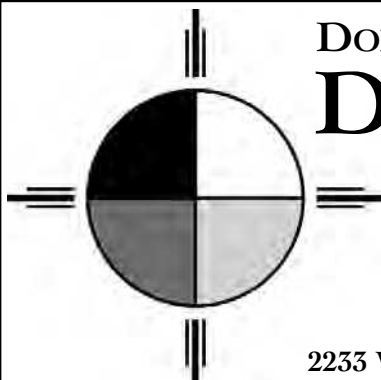
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