

# Changes in Oregon 'Timber Belt' get close examination

By ERIC MORTENSON  
Capital Press

The "Timber Belt" running from Northern California up through Oregon and into Washington sustained an economic collapse and population loss similar to the "Rust Belt" and "Corn Belt" of the Midwest, but its recovery has been entirely different, according to the Oregon Office of Economic Analysis.

In a new report on demographic and economic trends unfolding in rural Oregon, state analysts detail pockets of resurgence, surprisingly hopeful statistics and unanswered questions of what comes next.

"All along the Timber Belt, people keep moving in" at a pace just as strong as the migration to urban centers such as Portland, state economists Mark McMullen and Joshua Lehner wrote.

"In general, these incoming migrants are different than the households moving out," the analysts wrote. "Much of the time they are older and relocate to rural Oregon as they retire or reduce their work hours."

The new residents of rural Oregon bring a "lifetime of experience" and wealth, "often in the form of California home equity," McMullen and Lehner wrote.

"Figuring out how best to exploit the Timber Belt's strong influx of retirees should be a top priority given such individuals are voting with their feet, in essence, saying they want to live in the area and be a part of the community," the analysts said. "Overall this is certainly a good thing."

## Those who stay

Rural Oregon loses population during the "root setting" years of ages 25 to 34, when young adults are establishing careers, starting families and buying homes, the report said. Unlike most of rural America, however, Oregon is offsetting those losses with older migrants.

But for the young adults who stay in rural Oregon, McMullen and Lehner said statistics show children raised in rural Oregon, especially Eastern Oregon, have a good chance of succeeding in life.

Harvard University's Equality of Opportunity Project found that a rural Oregon child born at the bottom income level had a strong probability of reaching the top level as an adult, the authors said. Among more than 700 communities nationwide, the Oregon towns of Burns, Condon, Enterprise, John Day and Lakeview were among the top third in fostering such success, according to McMullen and Lehner.

Bruce Weber, director of the Rural Studies Program at Oregon State University, said the state analysis is "insightful."

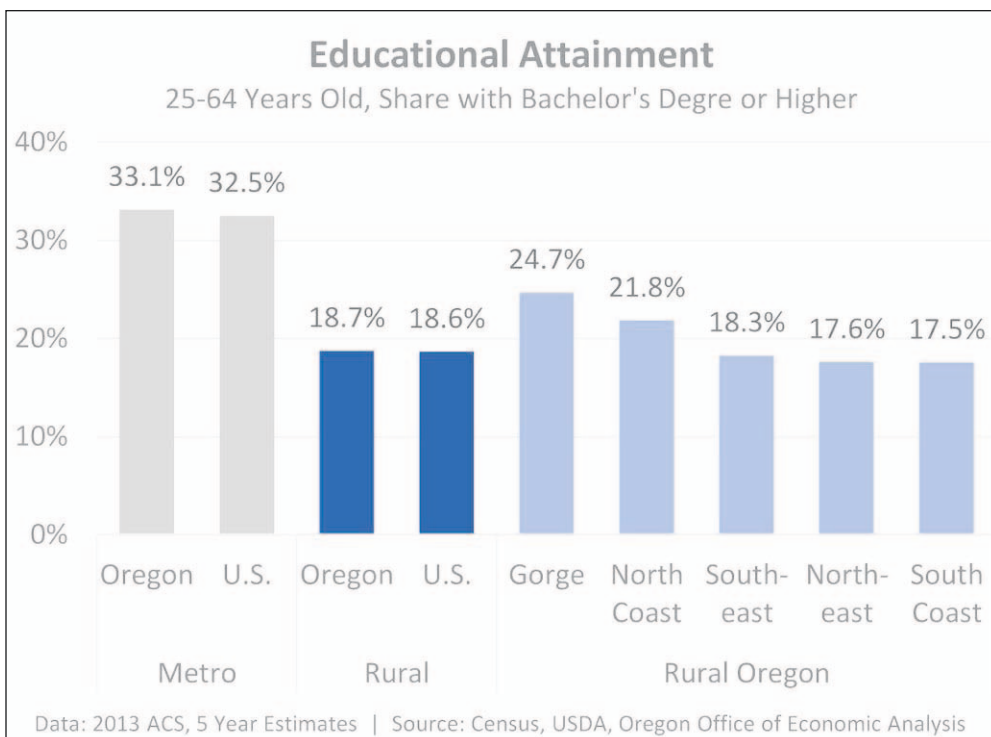
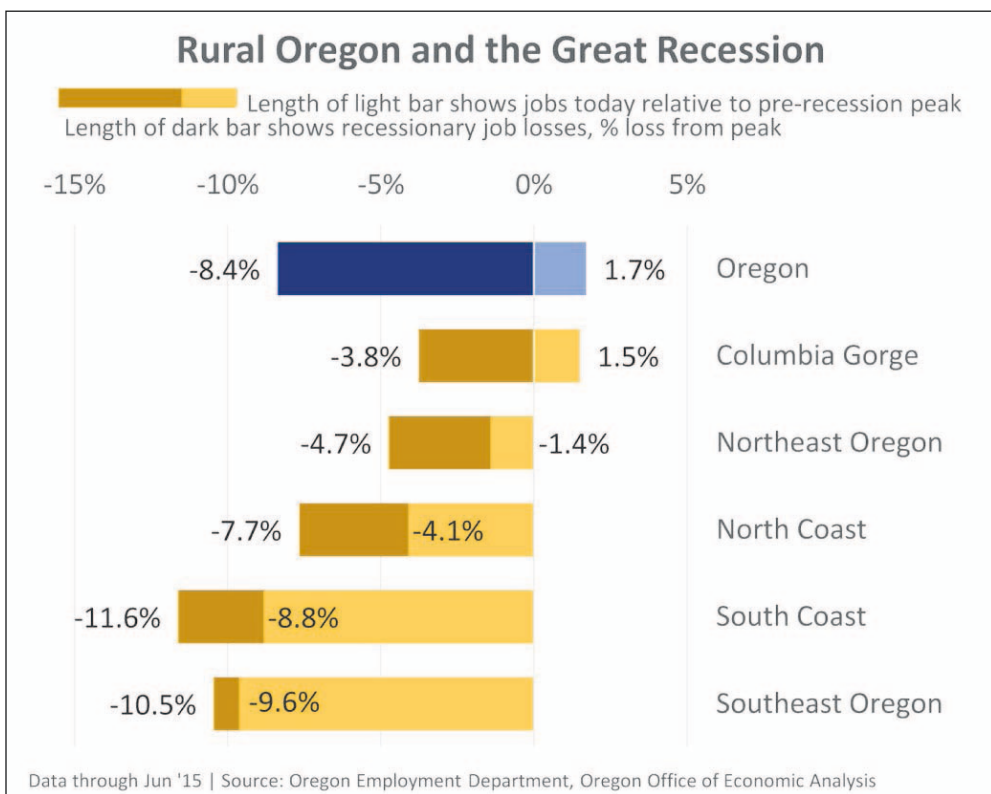
If the "boom and bust" nature of rural economies "creates an environment in which children grow up with different expectations and different levels of investment in education, these could also reduce upward mobility," Weber said in an email.

## In recovery

Meanwhile, economic recovery in Oregon has pockets of success and stagnation.

While Portland and its suburbs are popping again, most of rural Oregon has not recovered the jobs lost in the recession, the authors said. An exception is the Columbia River Gorge, which the analysts said has benefited from three major trends.

First, agriculture remains strong, mainly fruit, and higher commodity prices helped local farmers. Second, wind farm construction provided investment and jobs from 2007 to 2011, which included the depth of the recession. Last, the unmanned aerial vehicle industry — drones — has grown dramatically over the past decade. In situ, a major drone manufacturer, is headquartered in Bingen,



**ONLINE**  
See the Rural Oregon analysis at <http://bit.ly/1KZlmg5>



Submitted photo

The "Timber Belt" runs from Northern California up through Oregon and into Washington.

Wash., across the Columbia River. jobs are on the Washington side of the Columbia River, however the economic and

population base in the gorge is on the Oregon side, where much of the consumer spending occurs," McMullen and Lehner wrote.

Although not cited by name in the state report, Hermiston, in Umatilla County, rode out the recession to become the biggest and fastest growing city in Eastern Oregon.

In Hermiston's case, a strong agricultural sector is a stabilizing base for the economy, City Manager Byron Smith said.

"However you want to phrase it, people still need to have food," he said. "A lot of our economy is based on that, either the actual production or the processing of agricultural products."

Hermiston farmers grow potatoes, onions, melons and multiple types of other irrigated vegetables. The area has several food processing plants, and attracted a DuPont Pioneer corn seed research station.

Finally, the city diversified its economy through growth in the transportation and logistics sector. Wal-Mart has a distribution center in Hermiston, and FedEx and UPS also have facilities in the area.

"That's another piece of the economy that does well for us," Smith said.

## WANTED

**Classified/Inside Sales**

The Daily Astorian is looking for an individual with excellent customer service skills, both in person and over the phone. Someone who brings an upbeat and "go get 'em" attitude to the table, works well with a team as well as alone. This position requires great computer skills, accurate spelling, the ability to receive incoming classified advertising calls as well as calling advertisers back for ad renewals. Manage special monthly projects requiring cold calls. Must be persistent and be able to handle rejection with ease. This is a full time position, working Monday through Friday. Evenings and weekends off, plus paid holidays!

**REWARDING CAREER**

Competitive wage plus commissions. Benefits include paid time off (PTO), insurances and a 401(k)/Roth 401(k) retirement plan.

Send resume and letter of interest to  
EO Media Group, PO Box 2048, Salem, OR 97308-2048,  
by fax to 503-371-2935 or e-mail to: [hr@emediagroup.com](mailto:hr@emediagroup.com)

## Consult a PROFESSIONAL

**Robby's**  
Furniture & Appliance  
Astoria • (503)325-1535  
1555 Commercial Street

Store Hours  
Mon. - Fri. 9:30 to 5:30  
Saturday 10:00 to 5:00

More Locations:  
Tillamook • (503) 842-7111  
1126 Main Ave  
Lincoln City • (541) 996-2177  
6255 SW Hwy. 101  
Newport • (541) 265-9520  
5111 N. Coast Hwy.  
Florence • (541)997-8214  
18th & Hwy. 101

**Q: Can I touch up my furniture?**

**A:** Wood damaged with knicks and scratches can be effectively touched up. There are a variety of special touch up products available to assist you with repairing these types of moderate damage. Any damage more severe would require professional refinishing.

**LEO FINZI**  
Microsoft REGISTERED Refurbisher

Compare & Save \$ Here!  
Staples charges \$29.99 to set up your new printer purchase. We do it for FREE!!

**Astoria's Best**  
NETWORK AND COMPUTER SALES, SERVICES & REPAIRS

M-F 10-6, Sat 12-5  
1020 Commercial #2  
503-325-2300

**Q: How do I import my favorites into the new Edge browser?**

**A:** Click on 3 dots in top right hand corner. Click on "Settings." Click "Show Favorites Bar" click "Import Favorites from another browser." Check mark your old browsers, then click "Import"

Click the back arrows at top left. Under "Open with" click "A specific page..." Click down arrow at right, choose "Custom" & type in page(s) to start up in the box just below.

**JEFFREY M. LEINASSAR**  
DMD, FAGD

503/325-0310  
1414 MARINE DRIVE,  
ASTORIA  
[www.smileastoria.com](http://www.smileastoria.com)

**Q: When should I take my child to the dentist for the first check-up?**

**A:** Before this first appointment, it is very important for all to realize that the child's teeth are very important in the development of his/her jaw. As soon as they begin to erupt, approximately at 6 months, it is so important to keep the baby teeth cleaned. You may use a soft brush, or a finger gauze. Baby teeth accumulate plaque and bacteria just as adult teeth. Also, please be aware and careful of nighttime nursing bottles and a lack of cleaning the child's teeth which may lead to a condition called nursing bottle syndrome (lots of decay). If all this is followed, teeth look good, child had no complaints, then first visit somewhere around age 2 1/2 - 3 is a good time to check.

**Coastal COMMUNICATIONS**  
TELEVISION INTERNET PHONE

503-739-8775  
300 S. Roosevelt Dr. #7  
Seaside, OR 97138

**SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL RETAILER!**

Monday-Friday: 10-3  
Sat. & Sun.: by appointment  
Installs 7 days/week

**Q: Is it true that television pricing no longer goes up after the first year?**

**A:** Yes! We now offer a 2 year price lock option for all new qualified customers. You can also choose first year promotional pricing with packages starting at just \$29.99 for programming on two tvs! Stop by today and explore all of your tv, phone & internet options under one roof. Put your money where your life is and shop local!

**RUBBER BOOT STOMP & SALE**  
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4TH  
10 TO 3

**Astoria SUNDAY MARKET**  
[astoriasundaymarket.com](http://astoriasundaymarket.com)  
Now through Oct. 11  
12th Street • 10am to 3pm

**Q: What is the Rubber Boot Stomp?**

**A:** The Rubber Boot Stomp & Sale is a fundraiser for The Harbor -- whose mission is to deliver hope and services to survivors of domestic violence. We invite you to donate rubber boots to auction off! Use the rubber boots as a canvas for your art, to sculpt, or to up-cycle into something new!

Then join us Oct, 4th as we "Stomp through the Market" to kick-off the boot sales!

Sisters Olive and Nut Co.

503-325-4876  
or 541-549-8047  
1144 COMMERCIAL ST., ASTORIA  
order online at  
[www.sistersolive.com](http://www.sistersolive.com)

**Q: How did Sisters Olive & Nut Co. end up in Astoria?**

**A:** After eight successful years of business in Sisters, Oregon, the owners of Sisters Olive & Nut Co. decided the time was right to branch out. It did not take long to realize that scenic Astoria was the right fit for them and their business. In Astoria, they felt a vibe of rejuvenation and growth, and they were compelled to make their business a part of this wonderful community. Considering all that Astoria has to offer, it was not a hard choice to make. Bon Appetite!