

Education



Former Oregon Sen. Mark O. Hatfield (from left), Sy Adler, PSU professor and Planning A New West authors Margery Post Abbott and Carl Abbott

Book looks at Columbia River Gorge

Formation of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area more than a decade ago started a whirlwind of controversy over land-use planning and the politics of local versus federal control. Now, a recently published book takes a comprehensive look at the creation, management and tenuous future of the Scenic Area, which continues to draw both vociferous support and opposition.

Planning a New West, published by Oregon State University Press, outlines the bold effort in environmental planning that led to the Scenic Area's creation in 1986. Authors

of the book are Carl Abbott and Sy Adler, professors of Urban Studies & Planning at Portland State University, and marine transportation specialist/writer Margery Post Abbott of Portland.

The book appears at a time when debate over future funding of the Columbia River Gorge Commission rages among politicians and residents throughout the Pacific Northwest.

"This seemed like a natural project to focus on—a bold experiment in planning going on right in our own backyard," said Adler. This land-use planning experiment, the authors

note, remains a work in progress.

Former Oregon Senator Mark O. Hatfield, a prime supporter of legislation creating the Scenic Area, said the Area "is fundamental to our whole concept of land-use, in getting diverse interests together for consensus building."

Hatfield recently received a copy of the book at an informal meeting of the authors and book officials at Portland State's College of Urban and Public Affairs. Hatfield has joined the College's faculty as Distinguished Professor of Government and plans to guest lecture at PSU within a number of departments.

Treasurer works to save money

With education funding becoming more critical and complex, State Treasurer Jim Hill has stepped up his efforts to help both the Legislature and Oregon's school districts adequately fund K-12 education.

Treasurer Hill has introduced legislation that will save school districts money by allowing the districts to use the state's bond rating when issuing debt.

The legislation, entitled the Oregon School Bond Guarantee Act, allows districts to use the state's AA rating, which is higher than most rural and smaller districts.

The bill, which has gained full support and passage from the House Revenue Committee could save Oregon schools \$5 million in the first year alone and as much as \$22 million in the first five years.

"As a state, we need to come together and do whatever we can to see that all Oregon children have the best education possible," Hill said. "The Oregon School Bond Guarantee Act has a single purpose, and that is to save money. It will allow schools to use that savings as additional resources to enhance the quality of elementary and secondary education in Oregon."

Treasurer Hill also served as a financial resource to members of the House of Representatives and helped legislators develop a bonding program contained within the House's education budget.

Money for the bonding program comes from the Education Endowment Fund, which is managed by the Treasury. The bonding program is designed

to sell lottery-backed bonds to fund capital needs for schools. In 1994, the Treasury championed the use of lottery bonds when it issued them for the West Side Light Rail Project in Portland. In fact, Oregon was the first state in the nation to back bonds with lottery revenues.

"The treasury worked closely with members of the legislature to work out the details of this bond program, and I believe it will be very beneficial to Oregon's school children," Hill said. "The bond proceeds will be used for a variety of projects, including the purchase of land and buildings and technology improvements. Upgrading our schools' computers and technology will be critical to giving our kids a competitive advantage in today's fast-changing society."

Roosevelt presents cash awards

Students from Roosevelt High School, participating in the PGE Foundation's Current Exchange program, presented Portland area nonprofits and school groups with community grants at a reception on Tuesday.

PGE Foundation Current Exchange program is a Youth in Community Service program created to involve high school students with local nonprofit organizations, and to teach the values of philanthropy and community service.

The grantmaking program is designed to provide students with school-to-work experience, a chance to learn about social issues, leadership and teamwork.

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