

Oregon Vital Statistics 1997 Annual Report

PORTLAND- "Oregon Vital Statistics Volume 1 1997" and "Oregon County Data Book 1997," have been released, according to public health officials at the Department of Human Services.

Research analysts at the Oregon Health Division found positive changes, but work is still needed in some areas. Findings from "Oregon Vital Statistics Volume 1, 1997," which contains birth, teen pregnancy and abortion data, include:

In 1997, Oregon recorded 43,765 births. The birth rate to Oregon women 15 to 44 years old was 63.0 per 1,000 females, a slight

decrease of 0.3 percent from 1996.

Eighty-one percent of Oregon mothers received early prenatal care in 1997, an improvement over the 1996 rate of 80 percent. Early prenatal care is associated with improved infant health. Oregon's year 2000 benchmark goal is for 90 percent of pregnant women to begin prenatal care early, in the first trimester.

Just over six percent of Oregon women who gave birth in 1997 were uninsured, an increase from 1996. The Oregon Health Plan expanded eligibility in 1998, so this may decrease in the future.

The percentage of women who

smoked while pregnant declined to 16 percent in 1997, from 18 percent in 1996. However, Oregon's rate remains 23 percent higher than the national rate. Women who smoke while pregnant have a higher risk of having a low birthweight baby.

The pregnancy rate among teens age 10 to 17 years decreased 3.7 percent to 18.1 per 1,000 teen females. Oregon's benchmark goal is 15 pregnancies per 1,000 teen females by the year 2000.

For the first time since 1974, the proportion of births to unmarried women declined from the previous year (from 30 percent in 1996

to 29 percent in 1997).

The "Oregon County Data Book 1997" contains both birth and death data by county. Some findings:

In 1997 a death occurred every 18 minutes in the state, for a total of 28,750 deaths. This is a death rate of 8.9 per 1,000 population.

During the past several decades, the heart disease death rate has fallen and the cancer death rate has risen. In 1997, among counties with at least 50 resident deaths, cancer was the leading cause of death in four counties: Baker, Grant, Lake, and Lane.

A record 816 Oregonians died

from diabetes in 1997. Diabetes-caused deaths have risen every year during the past decade, and diabetes is now the seventh leading cause of death in Oregon.

Ninety-three Oregonians died from AIDS in 1997. This was 130 fewer than the year before and the lowest number since 1988. More than one-half (56 percent of decedents) lived in Multnomah County.

Multnomah County contains only 20 percent of the state's population, but 40 percent of all homicide victims were Multnomah County residents. There were 53 murders in

Multnomah County; the state-wide total was 131. Oregon's homicide rate has declined annually since 1994.

For the first time since 1989, Oregon's infant death rate increased (5.8 per 1,000 live births), but this increase was statistically insignificant.

Complete copies of both reports may be obtained from the Health Division's Center for Health Statistics at 503-731-4354. They may also be accessed, along with other health data, on the Internet through the Health Division's web page at <http://www.oshd.org/cdpe/chs/statinfo.htm>

College Tuition Slows Its Climb

Rise is Less Than 5 Percent; Average In-State Tuition \$3,356 For Public University

Good news for folks with college-age kids: Tuition and fees nationwide rose less than 5 percent for the current school year, the smallest increase in four years, according to a study released today by The College Board.

Students and their families can thank a thriving economy, brimming state coffers, a vigorous stock market boosting endowments and efforts by schools to rein in costs, experts said.

They also cautioned it may not last.

"It's a zigzag phenomenon," said Jane Wellman, a fiscal and policy analyst at the nonprofit Institute for Higher Education Policy in Washington.

"Times are good. State budgets are better than they've been in over a decade," she said, adding that higher education fares well in good times.

But she warned, "When times are bad, it's the first thing to get cut."

The encouraging news was tempered by a second board study: There was a record \$64 billion in financial aid last year - most of it in the form of student loans.

And with inflation running at less than 2 percent in recent years, college costs still seem steep, said Patrick Callan, who runs the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education in San Jose, Calif.

Callan warned that many students are getting deeper into debt: "The fact that everybody needs to go to college to get a middle-class job ... The fact that you have to borrow more than you used to, this is a problem."

Callan's concern was reflected in the second survey, which found that loans, scholar-

ships and grants for 1998-99 added up to \$64 billion - 85 percent more than a decade ago, after figuring for inflation.

In all, 58 percent of the aid came from loans, up from 40 percent in 1980-81.

It's all worth it, College Board President Gaston Caperton said Monday in an interview from Washington. He said a four-year college degree doubles the earnings of a high school graduate.

"The average is around \$30,000 a year vs. \$60,000 a year," he said. The \$30,000 difference over a 40-year career equals \$1.2 million.

"That's the value of a college education," said Caperton, a former West Virginia governor. And even if it requires loans, he said, "I don't know anywhere in the world where you can make an investment and make that kind of return."

The College Board's first survey found the average undergraduate at a four-year public school in their home state pays \$3,356, or \$109 more for the 1999-2000 school year than last year - a 3.4 percent increase.

The price hike was much higher at a four-year private school. The average student there paid \$15,380, or \$671 more this school year than last, a 4.6 percent rise.

Costs of two-year public schools were \$1,627, or \$73 more, a 4.7 percent increase; and at private two-year schools \$7,182, for a rise of \$242, or 3.5 percent.

Students paying out-of-state or out-of-district charges did better. On average, the survey found, they paid \$8,706 at four-year schools, \$235 or 3 percent more. At two-year schools the average increase was a tiny 2 percent rise, or \$89, to \$4,818.

Similar increases were seen in the costs of living on-campus. Students at four-year private colleges this year are paying an average of \$5,959, a \$205 increase, or 3.6 percent over last year.

At a four-year public school, room and board this year averages \$4,730, or \$208 more, a 4.6 percent rise. At a private, two-year college

it averages \$4,583, a \$210 hike, or 4.8 percent more than last year.

The College Board, probably best known for administering the SAT college entrance exams, is a membership organization of high schools, colleges and universities that promotes higher education.

Caperton stressed that Americans need college degrees for the better paying, high-skill jobs offered in technology and the global economy. But fears of the high cost of school keep many away, he said.

"Education is expensive," Caperton said, "but it's not nearly as expensive as not getting an education."

Recycling increases, but so does amount of trash

Portland- Oregonians are recycling more paper, bottles and plastics - but they're also making more trash. New data from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality show that - for the seventh consecutive year - Portland-area residents led the

state for the amount of material recycled or burned for energy. Garbage haulers and recycling companies in Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties reported a 43 percent recycling rate in 1998.

That compares with an aver-

age 37-point-3 percent recycling rate for the state. But Oregonians generated an average of 7-point-2 pounds of garbage per person per day last year, the D-E-Q reported. That's an increase from 7 pounds in 1997 and 5-point-7 pounds in 1992.

Baby boomers' children, crowd classrooms

Portland- There is a new generation of baby boomers—the children of baby boomers.

The newest generation is crowding into Portland's classrooms with numbers nearly as great as their parents' generation.

The number of students in U-

S schools in 1998 was 48 million, second only to the original boomers' 49 million in 1970.

But the present demographic bulge will eventually grow larger than their parents group. Immigration will expand the numbers by millions over the next two decades. Oregon is feeling the

bulge mostly in suburban schools, where few schools are keeping up with the new wave of tots. Ninety-six percent of the state's schools are in need of repair.

But only about one third of school bond issues pass in Oregon.

Help shape our transportation future

During the past five years, residents have joined with local governments from across the region to identify how we can best meet our future transportation needs. Now it's time to take a final look at the Regional Transportation Plan - our 20-year blueprint for the region's transportation system - before it is finally adopted.

Regional elected officials are seeking comments on the plan's recommended motor vehicle, transit, pedestrian, bicycle and freight projects, and on ways to finance these long-term needs.

In addition, state and regional decision-makers need your input about transportation projects on the state system proposed for priority funding with part of the recently passed increase in the gas tax and vehicle registration fees.

Public comment meetings

Come to one of the following meetings to learn more and to comment:

5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 20

Conestoga Middle School
12250 SW Conestoga Drive
Beaverton

5:30 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 21

Gresham City Hall
1333 NW Eastman Parkway
Gresham

5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 26

Metro Regional Center
600 NE Grand Ave.
Portland

5:30 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 28

Monarch Hotel
12566 SE 93rd Ave.
Clackamas

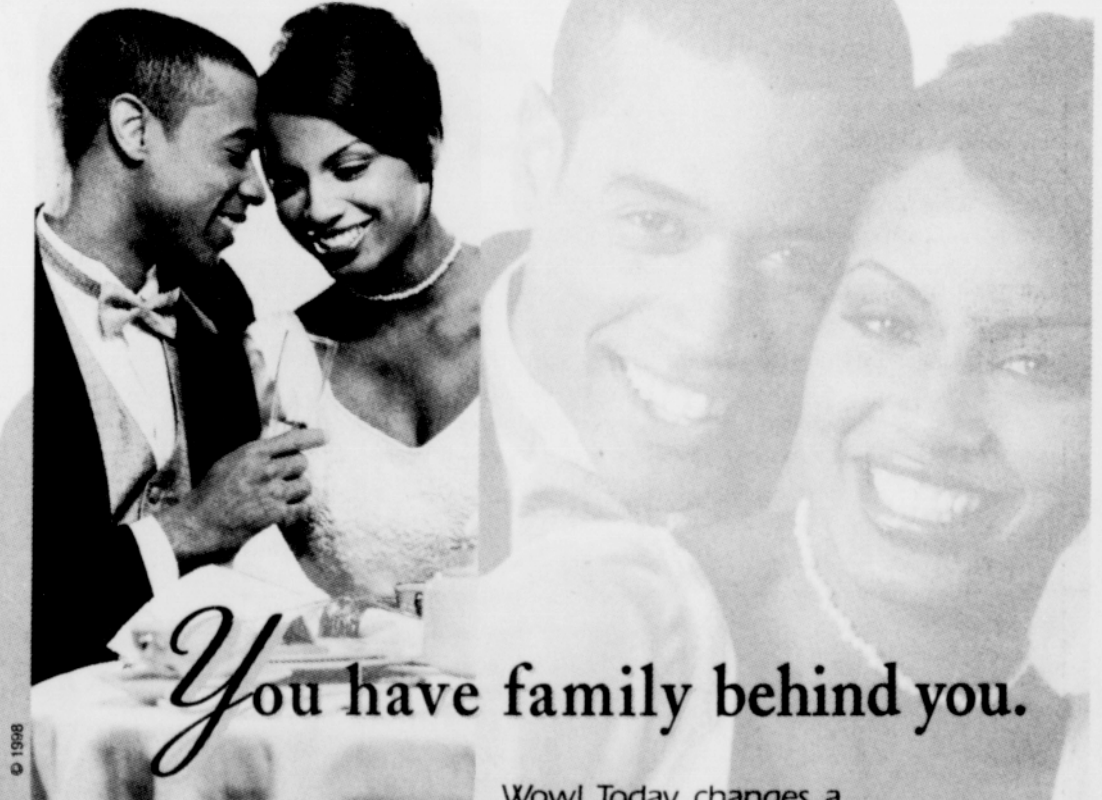
For more information, call Metro's transportation hotline, (503) 797-1900, option 2, or visit www.metro-region.org. For ODOT, call 731-8245 or visit www.odot.state.or.us/stip/



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