

# The Millennia Countdown

## Year 2000. What..... me worry?

BY JERRY DAWSON  
OF THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Earlier this month Robert X. Cringely, of PBS "Triumph of the Nerds" fame, spoke about the Y2K problem at The Business Journal's New Millennium Party, sponsored by Bank of America, Grant Thornton and Oregon Public Broadcasting. Cringely gave us some good news and some bad news: "The fact is that none of the experts I've talked to says Y2K will be a non-event. Their predictions range from minor annoyance to Armageddon." Cringely did provide some insight into some fairly common misperceptions. One is that people who now sell us goods and services will want to continue to do so in the year 2000, and beyond. For example, if the Y2K computer-related problems caused some billing difficulties for AT&T, does anyone really think they will stop us from making long distance phone calls? Of course not, but maybe they will have to re-

negotiate our bills, or give us a discount, or bill us later - but something will be done to preserve their money-making business of selling long distance phone ser-

clocks that in many cases are not Y2K compliant, but Cringely pointed out that most all of them receive their critical date-related information from systems outside the chip. Many of these processors have time critical functions, too, like stoplights, but the year may be irrelevant. A traffic light only needs to know the time of day and if it is a Monday of a Sunday.

Obviously, a lot of people are

worried about banks, stock exchanges, and other

mission-critical ser-

vices. Most of these have already been thoroughly tested and have, in fact, passed! Other, less critical businesses may have some Y2K problems, but because they are less critical they can (and will be fixed) without severe consequences.

Other businesses will also figure out what they need to do in order to stay in business. Money does talk.

Another concern receiving a lot of attention is that of imbedded processors, which control everything from milling machines to elevators. Sure, these imbedded processors have internal

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start. This became the measure of true friendship: who would you call to help you start your car? And, for whom would you get out of your warm bed to start a car? Your list of fifty people should start with immediate neighbors. Go over, knock on their door, and talk about Y2K with them. Find out how you can cooperate. We have constructed a society

where we rely on people based on money: we pay for counselors, cooks and cops. We may like our neighbors, but we don't NEED them. Y2K (or any other unforeseen emergency) can change all that overnight. And if it does, it may signal a new era of community cooperation. Which isn't a bad idea.



### Budget: Neighbors prove to be valuable asset

money. Between now and November, make a list of fifty people you can depend on if times get tight. And, because what goes around comes around, make a list of fifty people who can depend on YOU if times get tight. When I went to college, there were many days I would go out to a frozen car in need of a jump-

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