



See inside
Children waiting for adoption



The Focus centers in on Black History Month
See inside



See inside
Crimestoppers looks to solve 5 year-old crime

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Oregonians say population at limit

University of Oregon survey: Oregonians believe overwhelmingly that states population is too large or should not increase, cite congestion, housing prices as major concerns

CONTRIBUTED STORY
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Oregon's population will skyrocket over the next 25 years, according to the most recent projections.

That does not mean Oregonians like the idea.

A new statewide survey released by the Oregon Survey Research Laboratory (OSRL) at the University of Oregon shows almost no public support for any increase in the state's population.

The survey found that the majority of Oregonians (65 percent) say the state's population is now "about the right size," while 29 percent think it is already "too large" and would like to



PHOTO BY DAVID YANDELL

see it reduced. Only 2 percent of the survey respondents felt the state's population is "too small."

A number of respondents suggested reducing the state's population by 20 to 70 percent from today's population, citing urban congestion, increased freeway traffic and housing prices among their concerns.

The results came from the OSRL's second annual Social Indicators Survey, which measures a variety of social issues of interest to Oregonians. The telephone survey of 420 residents over the age of 18 provides results accurate to plus or minus 4.8 percent.

In another finding, 31 percent of Oregonians feel that there are "very serious" or "somewhat serious" problems with their drinking water, 29 percent have a home water treatment system and 53 percent purchased bottled water during the past month.

The survey also discovered that a majority of Oregonians (53 percent) believe that a sentence of "life in prison without parole" means that the person will be released, usually within 20 years.

Other survey results on topics from gun ownership and fears of nuclear war to feelings about the Kip Kinkel verdict are available from the Oregon Survey Research Laboratory, 5245 University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403-5245. Results also will be posted on the OSRL web page at <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~osrl>.

Oregon schools receive own grades

CONTRIBUTED STORY
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Stan Bunn today released the state's first report cards on school and districts.

An important new tool in the state's accountability system, the report cards collect and share data on schools directly with parents, communities and the public. They show that Oregon schools are on track.

"We have good news to report," said Bunn. "Ninety-six percent of our schools are exceptional, strong or satisfactory. We know Oregon schools provide a high quality education. Here is more proof. Of the 1,039 schools receiving report cards today, 1,000 have an overall school performance rating of exceptional, strong or satisfactory."

The Oregon Department of Education designed the report cards, required by the 1999 state legislature, to inform parents and communities about school performance in 1999 and improvement between 1996 and 1999.

(Please see 'Report' page A6)

Investigators search for clues in deadly Alaska Airlines crash

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Investigators trying to learn why an Alaska Airlines jet with 88 people plunged into the Pacific said today they have recovered four bodies and heard "pinging" from the ocean, apparently from the aircraft's flight recorders.

Officials hope data from the so-called "black boxes" could provide key clues to Monday's crash of the MD-83 jetliner, including whether the airliner was brought down because of problems with a device that's supposed to stabilize the plane.

"That is obviously a prime lead and a prime finding that will be followed," said Coast Guard Vice Adm. Tom Collins. The position of the pinging was pinpointed by a Navy underwater demolition team helping with the search, he said.

No survivors aboard Flight 261 have been found. Collins said the bodies recovered were those of an infant, two women and a man.

"This is still a search for human life. The decision to stop searching is mine, mine to make, and it's a difficult one," Collins said during a news conference.

Meanwhile, Coast Guard ships, Navy vessels and a private boat combed the choppy sea about 10 miles off the Southern California coast for additional debris that could help explain the crash.

Monday night, commercial squid boats used nets to haul in grim reminders of lives lost: a tennis shoe, a stuffed animal and a number of small souvenirs from Mexico. A stench of jet fuel hung in the air as the nets were pulled to the surface.

The flight en route from Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, to San Francisco and Seattle hit the water 4:36 p.m. Monday in what a witness described as a nose dive. The weather was clear at the time.

Moments prior, one of the two pilots radioed that he was having trouble with "stabilizer trim" and asked to be diverted to Los Angeles for an emergency landing, airline spokesman Jack Evans said.

The plane fell 17,000 feet before being lost from radar screens, officials said. It crashed in water 300 feet to 750 feet deep.

The flight was normal until the crew reported control problems, said a

source with close knowledge of the investigation, speaking on condition of anonymity. Radar showed the plane, an MD-83, plummeting toward the sea shortly afterward.

On MD-80 series airplanes, the horizontal stabilizer looks like a small wing mounted on top of the tail. The stabilizer, which includes panels that pitch the nose up and down, is brought into balance, or "trimmed," from the cockpit.

If a plane loses its horizontal stabilizer, there is no way to keep the nose pointed to the proper angle, and the aircraft will begin an uncontrollable dive.

Evans said the plane had no previous stabilizer problems, and Federal Aviation Administration spokesman John Clabes said it had never been in an accident.

A National Park Service ranger on Anacapa Island, off the coast of Oxnard, saw the airliner go down and was first to report it, said spokeswoman Susan Smith at the Channel Islands National Park headquarters.

(Please see 'Crash' page A6)



PHOTO BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Three unidentified women arrive at San Francisco International Airport Monday, Jan. 31, 2000, and head for an area of the airport where grief counselors were waiting for family and friends of the victims of the crash of Alaska Airlines Flight 261. The aircraft, en route to San Francisco from Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, went down Monday afternoon off the coast of Oxnard, Calif.

Weather

Through the weekend

Today Rainy 44°F/6°C
36°F/2°C

Thursday Rainy 44°F/6°C
32°F/0°C

Friday cloudy 45°F/6°C
31°F/-1°C

Saturday cloudy 45°F/6°C
32°F/0°C

Sunday Partial clearing 48°F/8°C
35°F/2°C

Inside-A

Week in Review.....2
Racial and Ethnic Task Force members appointed.....3
Community forums scheduled for interstate corridor renewal. 5
Low-interest bonds issued to stimulate growth.....6

Metro-B

Piedmont residents meet with developers.....1
NFL player arrested on murder charges.....2
Community leaders work to make a better place..... 3
El Observador.....4

This Week in History

On February 2, 1943, the remainder of Nazi forces from the Battle of Stalingrad surrendered in a major victory for the Soviets in World War II.
On February 4, 1974, newspaper heiress Patricia Hearst was kidnapped in Berkeley, Calif., by the Symbionese Liberation Army.
On February 7, 1984, space shuttle astronauts Bruce McCandless II and Robert L. Stewart went on the first untethered spacewalk.
On February 8, 1996, in a ceremony at the Library of Congress, President Clinton signed legislation revamping the telecommunications industry, saying it would "bring the future to our doorstep."