

Eighty Years of Power

Life in Oregon Vastly Easier Than in (Old) Days
When Grandfather Had Only Horses and Muscle

Oregonians of the Centennial year are supermen of energy.

They perform almost miraculous feats of labor in a few minutes rather than days, and live in dream homes—washing clothes, preparing meals and cleaning house in hours rather than in days of a week.

The energy today's Oregonians use so matter-of-factly is electricity.

In terms of its use at work and at home, a single kilowatt-hour, which is one thousand watts used for one hour, is the measure of a giant.

The muscle energy an average man can exert in one eight-hour working day for example has been calculated as equivalent to that of a mere 35 minutes of electricity.

How much work electricity performs is reflected by industrial applications. In terms of human energy equivalents, the average per-man use of 69 kilowatt-hours every day means that 240 men stand beside every worker at a sawmill head-rig in Prineville, a trailer assembly line in McMinnville, and a furniture factory in Pilot Rock. And throughout the state, based on average household use of electricity, the homemakers busily operate equipment equal to 90 servants at work each day in each home.

Great-grandfather could have used those extra hands in an early-day woolen mill at Brownsville or at clearing the Barlow Road, and grandmother would have welcomed the help in the homestead on the Tualatin plain.

Region Use High

Oregonians of today live in a region that enjoys the advantages of more electricity at use in their homes than anywhere else, twice as much as the national average and at a cost less than half the U.S. average. Forecasts are for consumption to double every ten years. The family that now uses between 7,000 and 10,000 kilowatt-hours annually will likely be using 14,000 or 20,000 in a decade.

Growth of the electric utility industry in the state has included eras of pioneering typical of the spirit that motivated the stalwart emigrants and their sons whose enterprise has marked the state's progress.

The earliest adoption in the state of the awe-inspiring idea that something invisible could make a motor turn faster than a steam engine, or produce a light brighter than a whale-oil lamp, was linked with arrival of ships in Willamette River ports.

Arms from a bare-wire circuit linked to a dynamo aboard the steamship California introduced the magic of electricity to Portland in 1879. The next year, the United States Electric Lighting and Power Company was formed in the city. Shortly thereafter a string of lamps served by a sawmill dynamo lit up Astoria on a Christmas Eve for the start of a service that eventually grew into the present utility there.

Other pioneering ventures included the first long-distance transmission of power, from the Willamette Falls hydroelectric plant,

which in 1889 was a pioneer in the west, to Portland, a distance of 14 miles. Then in 1905 the magnificence of 80,000 electric globes lighting the Lewis & Clark Exposition became the talk of the nation. Pioneering of rural electrification into Hood River and Willamette valleys by predecessors of Pacific Power & Light Company was an achievement of 1906.

Electric service for homes and factories became almost universal in later years, when power systems began linking larger areas to central station generating plants. During World War II these systems became interconnected and grew into the first regional power pool, of which the Oregon utilities are a part.

Because of these activities by the industry, Oregon has long enjoyed the benefits of ample elec-

tric supplies of light and power. Large dams now dot the state and the great rivers on its borders, and transmission networks link their powerhouses to farms, homes, and factories. Expansions are continuing, to provide for the years ahead.

The utilities serving Oregon share with the federal government in the greatest hydroelectric program ever advanced by any region. The construction caps more than a half-century of progress that rapidly is utilizing the remaining good hydroelectric sites in the region. Consequently, the electric utility companies are looking to thermal-type plants for the future power supplies. These may use fossil fuels, such as Coos County coal, or the unlimited energy of nuclear fuel ores being mined from the earth in Lake County.



NOT A CENTENNIAL POSED SHOT is the above picture, taken in 1906, of Ezra Meeker and his oxen in Pendleton.

sought and fought. And, strange as it may seem to many Easterners, it is none the less true that most of this 'extra room' is in an area with a mild, equable climate and some of the nation's finest scenery and natural recreations lands."

Impact Significant

Curry County Reporter, Gold Beach: "Oregon does not have the large population centers of eastern states so the smaller towns here serve a much more important purpose than similar-sized towns elsewhere. A town with no more than two or three thousand persons may be the trading center for a large area. This tends to place a strain on the small towns since they are, in a sense, 'playing over their heads.' In Gold Beach, for example with a population of 1,900 there is a general hospital, yet we have seen mid-western cities with populations of over 5,000 that do not have hospitals. Because of these factors, the small towns of Oregon have a significant impact on the state as a whole."

Influx Expected

Redmond Spokesman: "With decentralization of population evident on every hand, rural Oregon can expect an influx of new residents within the next dozen or so years such as it never saw in the last 50."

Malheur Enterprise, Vale: "...It is not so much what the future holds for non-metropolitan Oregon as that in the non-metropolitan Oregon lies the future."

Madras Pioneer: "Industry, at least light industry will find it desirable to locate in small towns, where employees can live and work in an atmosphere conducive to agreeable relations, permanent residence, and low turnover."

Pace Accelerated

Polk County Itemizer-Observer, Dallas: "The growth of non-metropolitan communities in western Oregon during the past 15 years has been consistent and is bound to continue at an accelerated pace. The day is here when comparatively small communities will be the center of manufacturing in various lines, where workmen are not compelled to travel long distances in crowded traffic. The expansion of the fruit and vegetable canning industry, together with valley irrigation to make this possible, means much for the entire valley. It means higher land production, market for needed products, employment for youths and women as well as men. The small towns of the area will see continued rapid growth and better local business."

Editors Comment

About Smaller Cities and the
Future of Them in Oregon

People differ widely as to what sized town they like (or city, if you please)—all the way from the metropolis to the village. They differ, too, as to their favorite types of town. Some like the so-called "bedroom" suburb, close to the big town; some prefer the rural town, the market-spot for the outlying country; still others are happiest to be in the little factory town, where they work at good jobs while their home towns grow into something different. All these are good weekly newspaper towns. The editors and their readers agree, generally, that these various types and sizes of towns are the backbone of Oregon, at once a supply depot and market for the producers on farm and in factory.

Following are some comments of editors about what the smaller cities and towns mean to Oregon and the outlook for the future.

Rural-Life Benefits

Woodburn Independent: "The smaller cities and towns mean that Oregon will continue to be a particularly desirable state in which to live. They provide the benefits of rural life but in most cases are close enough to big cities or metropolitan areas to make possible the sports and cultural advantages."

Valley Herald, Milton-Freewater: "The smaller towns and cities of Oregon furnish real 'grassroots' background for the State of Oregon. These smaller places are the provisioning points, the suppliers for much ranch and timberland area."

Madras Pioneer: "The smaller cities and towns of Oregon are rallying points for groups and individuals bent on finding ways to improve themselves and their communities."

Stayton Mail: "...smaller cities and towns offer the best living conditions...with pure air to breathe, elbow room to move about, no congestion to fight, picturesque natural setting to enjoy, and warm and friendly community relationships."

Many of our best citizens develop in the pleasant atmosphere of the small town."

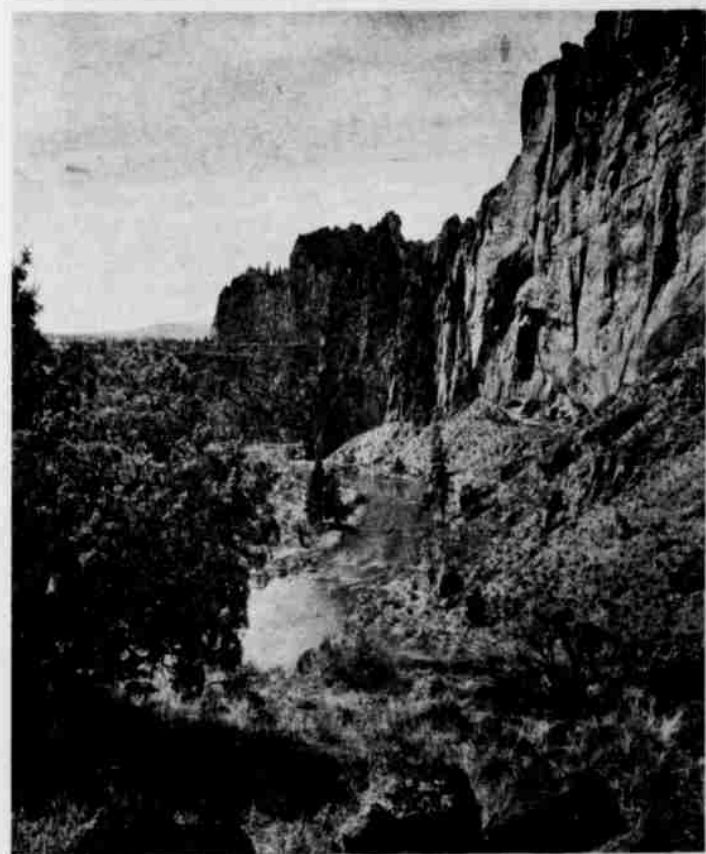
Seaside Signal: "To a great many residents of metropolitan areas towns mean Recreation. This is particularly true of the towns on the scenic Oregon Coast. The famous Clatsop beaches, Seaside, Cannon Beach, and Gearhart have held the interest of millions of persons seeking recreation over a period of 75 years. They still constitute one of the most popular recreational areas on the Pacific Coast because of a rare combination of ocean, extensive beaches, natural scenic beauty, and recreational development."

Newberg Graphic: "Families of today frequently prefer to live in smaller cities and towns, where they enter into community life. Towns close to larger cities and metropolitan centers attract people who commute to and from work but prefer the neighborliness of the smaller city to life in the metropolis. Suburban life is becoming more popular, and even in the smaller cities there is a tendency for many to build homes in the fringe area or on small acreages and subdivisions."

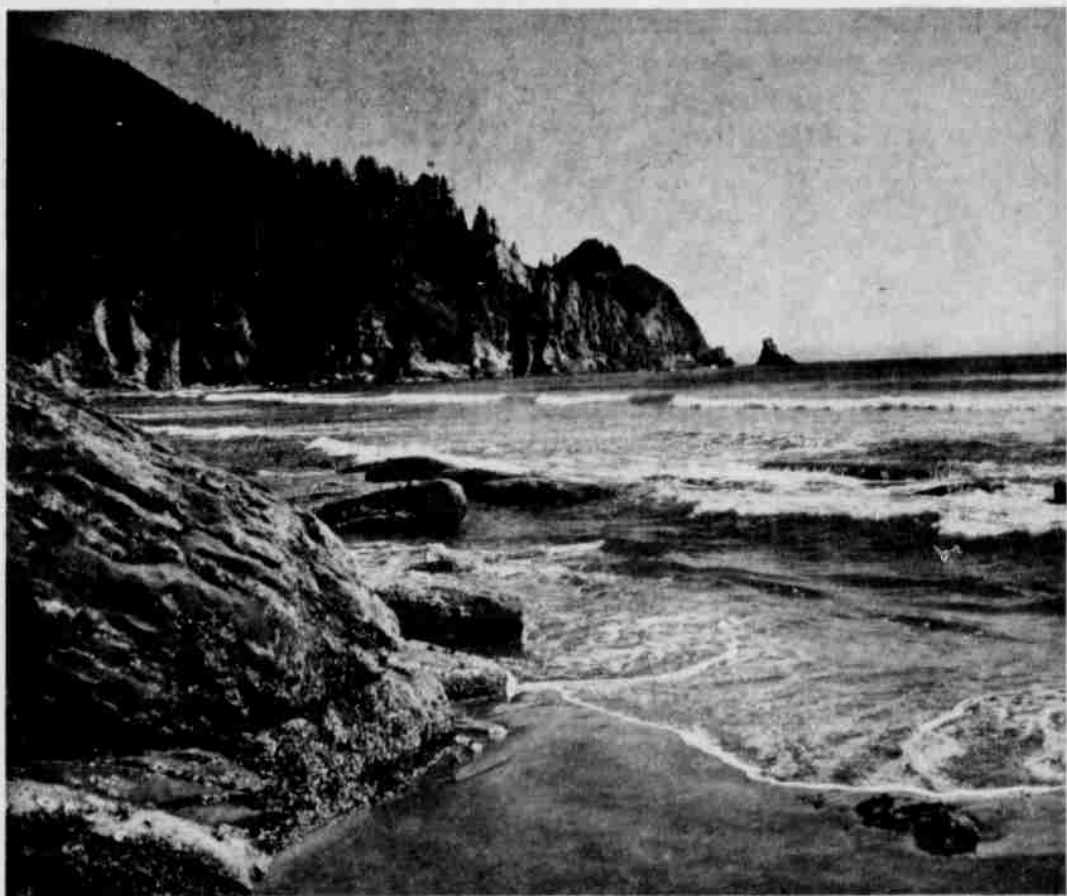
Small Towns Vital

Hermiston Herald: "The smaller cities and towns are just as important to the growth of our state as the large cities are—and just as vital as an aid to the continued growth of each."

Myrtle Creek Mail: "The future of non-metropolitan Oregon? It is Opportunity, unlimited. For, as this nation's population grows, here in Oregon are the untapped raw resources of timber, minerals, and water power, the sites for industry and homebuilding—the 'lebensraum' or living space, for which the people in many nations of the world have



SMITH ROCKS ON CROOKED RIVER, seven miles north of Redmond, is being promoted for a state park by the city of Redmond and the Redmond Chamber of Commerce.



OSWALD WEST STATE PARK preserves typically wild ocean shore upon which no developments are to be made to encroach upon the spectacularly scenic beach of three miles. The park also includes storied Neahkahnie mountain which rises 1795 feet from the Pacific ocean on the northern Oregon coast.