

Counties reimbursed for taxes

The Oregon Department of Revenue Friday completed reimbursing counties for the state's share of property taxes under the 1979 Tax Relief Plan. Union County, the last county to bill the department, received \$857,827.89.

A total of \$104.3 million was distributed to Oregon's 36 counties.

Under the Tax Relief Plan, the state pays part of the property taxes on homes. Counties show the state payment as a credit on homeowner property tax statements, then bill the revenue department for the state's share. The state reimburses the counties, which distribute the money to local taxing districts.

Payments to counties varied from a low of \$31,182 for Wheeler County to a high of \$28 million for Multnomah County. Most counties re-

ceived their payments in November.

The Oregon Department of Revenue has paid an additional 13 counties \$24,041.68 on behalf of older Oregonians who are deferring their property taxes. Morrow County received \$1,503.02 and was the lowest paid county. Clatsop was the highest paid county at \$41,608.

The revenue department paid 18 counties \$2.3 million during November. Five Oregon counties do not have any residents participating in the Senior Citizen's Property Tax Deferral Program this year.

Under the state's deferral program, homeowners age 62 and over can defer their property taxes. The taxes, plus six percent interest, are due when the home is sold or earns more than \$1,800 a year in income (such as from boarders), or the owner dies

or stops using the home as his or her main residence. The taxes can be repaid sooner, however.

Participation in the program increased from 2,000 homeowners in 30 counties last year to more than 4,000 counties this year. The state payment to the 31 counties

totalled \$2.6 million. Assessors bill the revenue department for the total amount of tax being deferred in their county.

Senior citizens who wish to participate in the deferral program must file applications with their county assessors between Jan. 1 and April

Oregon receives grant

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has awarded Oregon a \$197,382 grant to teach children, teachers and school food service personnel about nutrition. The money is part of a \$20 million grant to states made available through the Nutrition Education and Training Program (NETP) that was enacted into law two years ago.

States will use the grants to develop and carry out nutrition education and training programs in schools, and for projects that provide information on the important relationship between nutrition, food and health.

The grants provide each state with about 40 cents for each child enrolled in schools

and child care institutions. No state will receive less than \$75,000. Congress recently provided the \$20 million in the Agricultural Appropriation Act for Fiscal Year 1980 (Public Law 96-7).

A notice announcing how much money each state will receive appeared in the Dec. 7, Federal Register.

Drivers get liability insurance

More than 3,500 Oregon drivers have had to get liability insurance under the state's financial responsibility law after being convicted of driving without insurance this year.

In addition to convictions for driving without insurance, 4,350 drivers' licenses were suspended during the first 11 months of the year when random surveys of registrations or notices of cancellation from insurance companies showed liability insurance was not in effect.

The law provides that a citation for driving without insurance may be dismissed if the person cited goes to court within 15 days and shows proof that insurance has been obtained.

David P. Moomaw, administrator of the Motor Vehicles Division, said Friday that even though the two figures combined indicate nearly 8,000 drivers have violated the mandatory insurance law in some way this year, monthly surveys of driver accident reports show that only about four percent of the drivers involved in accidents do not have insurance.

Moomaw said about 15 percent of the drivers reporting accidents were uninsured before the mandatory law took effect in July of 1978.

Registration for winter term starts at BMCC

Registration for the winter term of classes offered by Blue Mountain Community College in Pendleton will be Wednesday, Jan. 2, starting at 8 a.m.

Students will receive registration materials in the Admissions Office in the college's Morrow Hall. They will proceed from there to meet their advisers, sign up on class rosters, enter their schedule on the computer and pay fees.

Classes for day students begin Jan. 3.

Evening division classes offered by the college both on and off campus begin the week of Jan. 7. Evening or part-time students may register by mail by completing a registration form on page 12 of the college winter term schedule of classes mailed. This form, along with tuition and fees payment may then be mailed to the college.

Weatherization tax credits now available for mobiles

More homeowners can now take advantage of the state's weatherization tax credit because of action by the 1979 Oregon Legislature. Owners of mobile homes, houseboats and individual units within multiple-unit residential housing can now claim the credit on their income tax returns if the weatherization work was done during 1979. Previously, only owners of conventional homes could qualify for the credit.

The credit will also be easier for taxpayers to claim when they file 1979 state income tax returns next spring. Homeowners will no longer need to have a building inspector or contractor certify that weatherization work meets building code standards. The homeowner alone may sign the certificate claiming the credit.

The credit, which reduces the amount of state income tax owed, is \$125 or one-quarter of the cost of the weatherization, whichever is less. The credit applies to various types of insulation, storm doors and windows, caulking and other items which make a home more energy-efficient.

Homeowners have until Dec. 31 to install qualified items they wish to claim for credit on 1979 taxes. The weatherization work must be done by that date, even if it is paid for later.

Some items which qualified for the 1979 credit will not qualify for 1980. The Oregon Department of Energy, which decides what items are eligible, has ruled that fireplace inserts, heat exchangers, glass fireplace screens and several other items will not qualify for 1980.

Information about items that qualify for 1979 is in a free circular, "Tax Credit for Weatherization," available by writing: Publications, Oregon Department of Revenue, State Office Building, Salem, OR 97310. A new list will be available in January on items that qualify in 1980.

Registration continues for BMCC

Registration is continuing in Heppner, Lexington and Lone for Blue Mountain Community College classes.

Three classes: Tole Painting, Cross-Country Skiing, and Oriental Cooking are closed with full enrollments.

The Private Pilot Ground School class will meet for the first class Jan. 10 in Lexington.

The Bridge class will begin Jan. 21 in Lexington.

For further information call the south Morrow County coordinator, Nancy Brownfield, at 676-5039.

Oregon Dept. of Transportation plans to conserve electricity

The Oregon Transportation Commission at its meeting recently approved a plan whereby the Department of Transportation proposes to save additional electrical energy over its present conservation program.

Among the proposals is a plan to reduce lighting along the State Highway System by

an additional 15 percent. This would result in a savings of more than 3 million kilowatt hours per year. Under the present conservation program, the Highway Division has reduced highway lighting by 30 percent, resulting in a savings of 6.3 million KWH per year.

H. Scott Coulter, state highway engineer, said con-

sultations would be held with appropriate police and traffic engineers, both within and outside the department, before lights are reduced in any area to ensure public safety.

Among other energy saving programs proposed are turning off the hot water in highway rest areas, workshops and park day-use areas.

This is expected to save about 300,000 KWH per year. Where practical, incandescent lights would be converted to fluorescent, and janitorial services would be shifted to daylight hours where possible.

All measures would be temporary during the extent of the current energy crisis, Coulter said.

Oregon homeowners receive \$3 million

Checks are in the mail to 17,000 Oregon homeowners for the state's partial payment of their property taxes under the Tax Relief Plan passed by the 1979 Legislature.

A total of \$3 million was distributed to homeowners in 26 counties.

Most Oregonians who filed claims under the new plan had the state payment shown as a credit on their fall tax statements. Homeowners whose claims were filed or processed late will receive the state payment directly from the Oregon Department of Revenue.

The revenue department issued checks today for claims received from county assessors by Dec. 13. The revenue department did not receive

claims in time to process checks for homeowners in the following counties: Benton, Douglas, Jackson, Lane, Linn, Morrow, Union, Washington, Wheeler and Yamhill.

Homeowners who do not receive a check by Jan. 2 should first contact their county assessor to see if the claim was approved and sent to the revenue department.

Checks will be issued in January for claims received by the department after Dec. 13.

Western Heritage Federal Savings & Loan Association sent out some \$315,000 to homeowners in northeastern Oregon.

The funds are the result of the Oregon Legislature's decision to reduce 1979 property

taxes by 30 percent. This reduction produced an excess amount in the tax reserve fund of many home loan customers

of Western Heritage. Refund checks should reach all qualified parties by Dec. 21, the association said.

Pendleton Grain Growers receive profit checks

Checks totalling \$185,037.51 were mailed Dec. 15 to members of Pendleton Grain Growers, Inc.

These checks, which are historically mailed at this season of the year, represent a portion of the profit made by PGG during 1979. "The money goes primarily to residents of eastern Oregon and Washington and is made possible by members doing business with

their locally owned company," according to Don Cook, general manager.

Cook commented this brought the total amount of cash paid back to local members during the year to a total of \$222,937.61. Cook added, "These are local profits being returned to local economies, which is good business for the entire community."

College gets grant for alcohol study

An Eastern Oregon State College project to teach farmers how to produce alcohol fuels from farm products will receive a \$10,000 grant from the Department of Energy's Office of Consumer Affairs.

EOSC Regional Services Director Terry Edvalson said he has been notified by telephone that EOSC will receive one of 14 nationally awarded grants.

"Basically it's seed money" said Edvalson, "with half going toward developing an educational program around a still we're just completing in cooperation with Grande Ronde Commodities Inc., a company owned by four Union County businessmen.

The balance of the money will be used to instrument the

still which will produce six to nine gallons of alcohol an hour using geothermal energy as the primary heat source.

That still will be the center of a lab for one-week workshop to give farmers practical hands-on experience in operating and maintaining equipment to produce alcohol from farm products.

"If alcohol fuel is going to work," said Edvalson, "the entire farm community has to become involved at some level." Not only can alcohol be mixed with gasoline to produce gasohol and to ease the push for imported oil, but its production provides a market for farm products such as grain, corn, potatoes and other commodities even in a distressed or damaged form.

Social security recipients get extra \$218 for fuel

Oregon residents who get federal supplemental security income (SSI) payments will automatically receive an extra \$218 in early January to help pay higher oil, gas or electric bills this winter. The extra check is in addition to the regular monthly SSI payment, according to Tom McPherson, social security branch manager in Pendleton. Social Security administers the SSI program. No application is necessary for this special payment by Social Security.

Most SSI recipients who received SSI checks for December are eligible for the special energy check from Social Security. SSI recipients living in institutions where Medicaid pays the majority of the cost will not receive a special energy assistance check since it is unlikely they will have to pay for any increased energy cost.

Additional assistance to help financially strapped households pay their winter heating bills is also available. Interested persons should contact the Blue Mountain Economic Development Council through its outreach workers for eligibility requirements.

The total cost of the special energy assistance payments program throughout the country, including the special checks to SSI recipients and grants to the States to help people with special emergency fuel or other energy related situations, is \$1.6 billion. Of that, \$400 million is being sent to SSI recipients. \$400 million is allocated to the Community Service Administration, including \$250 million previously allocated, for the Energy Crisis Assistance Program, and \$800 million is being given the states in block grants.

The special energy check for each SSI recipient in Oregon will be the same. The amounts do vary from state to state, however, ranging from \$34 in Hawaii to \$250 in eleven states. The individual state amounts are determined by a three-part formula which takes into account local weather conditions, the number of SSI recipients in the state and certain energy consumption statistics for the state.

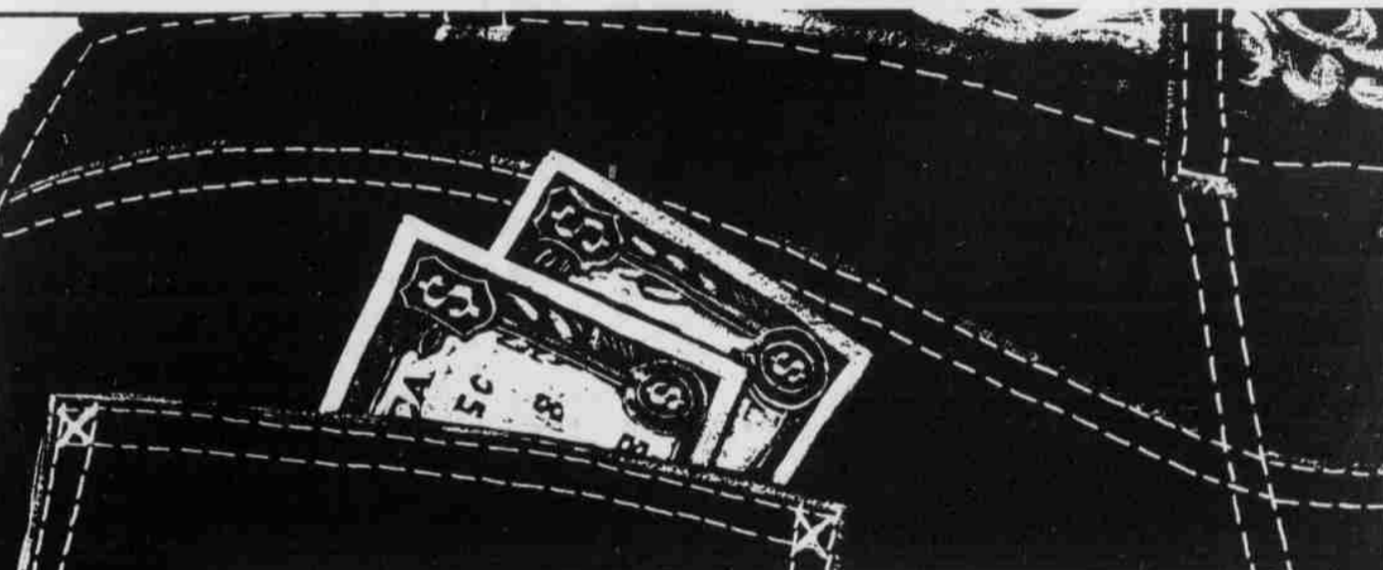
People who received a December SSI check but do not get a special energy assistance check by January 15 should contact Social Security. This is especially true for SSI recipients who use direct deposit and may not have kept social security informed of their current mailing address. The special energy checks are being mailed to the homes of SSI recipients, including those using direct deposit.

The address of the Pendleton Social Security office is 715 S.E. Court or P.O. Box 1288. The telephone number is 276-3811, extension 202.

Peterson urges involvement

Don Peterson participant in world hunger concerns, member of the hunger task force of the North Pacific District of the American Lutheran Church, and active participant in collective bargaining through the National Farmers Organization, reports that everyone interested in food and farm structure may write to Project Coordinator, Structure of Agriculture, USDA, Washington D.C. 20250.

Peterson attended the Dialogue on American Agriculture in Spokane and testified. Three basic concerns expressed during the day dealt with the size and structure of farm units, where to cut the USDA budget and the effect of parity prices on the economy.



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