

University's Bureau of Municipal Research Completes 25-Year Planning Project

Lane County Plan Launched Without Public Notice

(Editor's note: This is another in the series of articles on research and public service activities of the state's tax-supported colleges and university. The articles on research and public service activities of the state's tax-supported colleges and university. The following article discusses the activities of the bureau of municipal research of the University of Oregon.)

By MRS. WILMA MORRISON
Early in March the bureau of municipal research at the University of Oregon chucked up what planning officials around the state regard as the most significant advance of the past 10 years toward effective community development.

The reason for rejoicing is a 25-year transportation and industrial (land-use) planning project for Central Lane county, launched virtually without public notice, by 25 federal, state and local officials at a Eugene meeting.

Herman Kehrl, director of the bureau of municipal research, said the cooperative project is news because, for the first time, it brings together with county and local agencies, the forces—and funds—of two federal agencies, the bureau of public roads and the federal housing and home finance agency. **Had Stronger Words**

Other city officials and community planning men had stronger words for this cooperative survey which the bureau has master-minded. One professional planner said, "Getting the state highway commission (which administers the federal public roads funds) to come in, makes what has happened in Lane county almost the millennium as far as urban planning in Oregon is concerned." He added, "We have never wanted to duplicate their (the highway commission's) work; we just want to work with them."

Kehrl said he now sees a definite trend toward cooperation between highway planners and community planners who, in the past, "tended to meet only where they clashed."

In the Lane county project \$10,000 of public roads funds and \$13,000 from the federal housing and home finance agency have been committed, along with another \$5,000 from the Central Lane county planning commission. **Illustrate Coordination**

Bringing together the frequently opposing forces of highways and land-use planning, of state government and local government, to plan Lane county's development, is an illustration of the catalytic—the coordinating—role that has become an increasingly important part of the university bureau's work.

It would be hard to over-emphasize the influence on the state over the past 28 years of this university-based, fact-finding bureau organization. Any historian could find in the more than 500 research studies and how-to-do-it guides it has published, and in the annual files of questions it answers, the human drama as well as the legal record of a changing Oregon. In the literally hundreds of legislative measures its staff has written or helped write, the bureau has been instrumental in shaping everything from taxes to traffic, from reserve funds to retirement law.

When federal funds were made available for urban planning four years ago, the bureau at the university was the agency selected to administer the state-wide program. Currently a special staff of 12 is heading the urban renewal work in 34 towns, and the federal grants involved run to about \$400,000. These are a few in the long cata-

4 Million Gain Noted by Bank
The United States National Bank of Portland, with 73 banking offices in Oregon, has recorded a \$4 million gain in deposits since the comparable call date in March, 1959, it was reported by the controller of currency.

Deposits at the Medford branch totaled \$21,825,201.19, compared with \$10,848,544.08, according to Allan Perry, manager.

Total deposits in the bank's local offices reached \$793,840,321, compared with \$790,025,949 last year.

In the past year the bank has opened new branches at Baker, Halfway and Warrenton and Portland.



DIRECTOR HERMAN KEHRLI
Incorporation, Annexation Lead List

logue of activities since establishment of this urban research and service agency in 1932.

Kehrl has headed the bureau ever since it was set up as a means of serving Oregon's urban communities in the way that agricultural experiment stations and agricultural extension were serving the rural areas. His second role, as executive of the League of Oregon Cities, has involved him in the activating—the legislative—side of municipal and county government.

As the times have changed, the bureau's focus and scope have changed.

Use of Word Fringe
The word "fringe" which once meant something that waved from the top half of a sash or the bottom half of a chorus girl, has taken on a hyphen and a new meaning. As "fringe-area" or "urban-fringe," it now covers a complex of population conditions which A. M. Westling, planning and public works consultant on the bureau staff,

says "constitute the single greatest problem among Oregon's towns."

Oregon's population increased by some 255,000 between 1950 and 1958 from 1,251,000 to 1,777,000, and most of the increase was on the edges of towns and cities. The head count within Eugene and Springfield city limits, for example, is 64,000 but when the spreading fringe of the two towns is included it is 110,000.

It is the financial, the governmental, and the timing problems involved in getting basic urban services—streets, schools, sewers, power, water, police, and all the rest—into these suddenly expanded areas that is straining municipal resources and working the bureau staff overtime.

Serious Side Effect
And, in back of it all, the automobile which is increasing much faster than people. (There were 13 per cent more people in Oregon in 1958 than in 1950 but there were 21 per cent more cars.)

Today the car problem of the 1920's—encroachment of the state on the city father's control of traffic, and the local stake in the new state gas tax—look like child's play to city officials and the bureau. Today the questions born of a community on wheels are not confined to parking and traffic. They are the complications of the growing commuter fringe, the spread of commercial concerns into the suburbs, with its serious side effect—the threatened death of the downtown business districts.

Some of the hundreds of questions the bureau, in its clearing house role, tries to answer, are as new as the times. Others are as old as human nature itself. How can the town of Boardman, doomed to be flooded out of existence by the John Day Dam, retain its legal status after it ceases to exist, in order to receive damages from the government with which to build new facilities at another location?

Could the partial flooding of Arlington by the same dam

MAIL TRIBUNE, Medford, Or.
Thursday, March 24, 1960

come under the federal definition of "blighted area" and thus make that town eligible for urban renewal funds?

Legal Complications

What of the legal complications of an incorporated town, Brookings, when, not so many years ago, it found that its sewer and water systems were the property of an individual, the former owner of the town site?

Does a municipal government have the authority to regulate the tone and volume of locomotive whistles? Can it require that horses on its streets be shod with rubber shoes to save pavement wear and tear? How to draw a model dog ordinance that will please everyone—including the dogs?

Lloyd Keefe who was eight years a planning director for the Portland planning commission and is now executive of Downtown Planning, Inc., gives the university-based bureau of municipal research chief credit for organizing county-wide and metropolitan area planning organization—including the Multnomah county planning commission.

Complex Problems
"Here is a pool of governmental experts to serve the state particularly at the local level where it is hardest to get experienced officials," he

said. "They can spread the word—the standards and methods of good government—at the local level where, to put it bluntly, we have the least competence, but where the problems are the most complex."

Among the many educational services the bureau renders to better local governments are the annual police schools—seven of them over the state—and the training sessions for city and county finance officers.

"Organization and training of police is the hardest part of municipal administration," Kehrl says. He has been trying for 10 years to get the state to provide a full-time man for this, and believes such a capable person spending all his time on the job "would be the biggest contribution to local government that could be made—someone to make a real professional organization out of the police of smaller cities."

Which local issues carry the most emotional dynamite? **Incorporation, Annexation**
After 30 years in the middle-man's seat, Kehrl says the questions of incorporation and annexation are the ones that split communities. Zoning is a runner-up for honors in setting neighbors at each other's throats.

The greatest changes in Oregon towns? The swing to professional administration. All cities over 10,000 except

Portland now have managers, the bureau director said. "I can remember when many towns elected their chiefs of police, municipal judges, city attorneys."

Finally, the bureau staff sees a pronounced change in philosophy in Oregon towns since World War II—the feeling that the state is going to grow, that the larger towns are going to grow in spite of anything—and that local leadership has to be more than a retroactive scramble to catch up with the present.

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