

Oregon Has the Only Continuing 'Town Meeting' Throughout Nation

By ZAN STARK
 United Press International
 SALEM, Ore. (UPI)—Oregon is a state where the taxpayer can say "no" and mean it.

Residents are proud of their "Oregon system," which produces the only continuing statewide "town meeting" government in the land.

The voters can strike down laws or tax bills they do not like, and initiate their own legislation.

This year, voters dumped a \$60 million tax increase package approved at the regular session of the legislature to finance the state's \$404 million general fund budget.

Gov. Mark Hatfield then called a special session of the legislature to enact budget cuts demanded by taxpayers.

Voter Is King
 As a visiting Republican governor asked incredulously of Hatfield, "You mean you let the voters decide if they want a tax increase in your state?" In Oregon they do.

As a result, there is a strange mixture of political philosophies, disrupted party alignments, and almost total lack of party discipline in Oregon.

Republican Governor Hatfield recommended an austerity program. It was ratified by a Democratically controlled legislature. But the vote was not along party lines.

Because the voter is king, politicians play it "every man for himself."

Voters Adopt System
 The story of Oregon's unique system began shortly after the turn of the century when the voters adopted the initiative and referendum.

Since that time lawmakers have been in a contest with the voters to adopt legislation that will not be overturned.

When new tax bills are enacted, there's a breathless 90-day wait while the electorate decides if it wants to refer the measure to a special election. It gives voters a sporting

chance to overthrow tax bills they do not like.

That's what happened this year. Some 23,000 signatures were needed on referendum petitions to bring the tax bill to a special election.

Weekly newspaper Editor J. Francy Howard attacked the bill with such editorial vigor he unexpectedly found himself heading the referral movement.

The underfinanced and disorganized drive netted 75,000 signatures in a matter of weeks.

Despite efforts by the governor and most of the state's daily newspapers to salvage the tax program, it was defeated 3 1/2 to 1.

Sometimes legislators are so sensitive about the power of the people that nothing gets done. That is the major drawback to such overwhelming people-participation in government.

Party organizations suffer. Compared with many states, Oregon is unbelievably "clean" politically. It's so "clean" there is no real party patronage.

Without patronage, there is no level to enforce party discipline. Oregon office seekers run on the issues—often in the face of their own party platforms.

For example, during the special session, legal snags threatened creation of a 100,000-acre space age industrial park in the desert wastelands of north-eastern Oregon.

The project is a Hatfield pet, and he was forced to ask the Democratically controlled legislature to pass special legislation to bail it out of difficulties.

It was a politically explosive issue—one made to order for a party-line slap at the governor.

Starts Sizzling Attack
 Former Federal Power Commissioner Howard Morgan, who may be a Democratic candidate for governor when Hatfield's term expires in 1966, rallied Democrats and kicked off a sizzling attack.

The battle was swiftly gaining momentum when the assassination of President Kennedy stunned the legislature into a nine-day recess.

When the session resumed the battle sputtered for a day, then lawmakers approved the Hatfield bill, and went home.

It appeared that during the recess legislators got "the word" from constituents who didn't think the project should be made a political football.

Avoid Making Cuts
 During the axe-wielding special session, legislators avoided making cuts in their own pay, which earlier this year had been raised from \$50 to \$250 a month.

An initiative movement to correct the lawmakers' oversight, and halve their pay, already is under way.

In a post-special session press conference Hatfield said he wouldn't start drafting a revenue program for 1965-67 until after the deadline passed for the people to initiate revenue measures.

At least two citizens groups now are investigating the possibility of initiating a sales tax to appear on next year's ballot.

Oregon's statewide town meeting is still in session.

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FROZEN CAR—Typifying the intense cold wave which has gripped Chicago for the past several days is this ice-covered automobile, frozen over as the result of a broken water main. Temperatures have dipped to record levels with no relief in sight. (UPI)

Ceiling, Roof Are Damaged by Blaze

Ceiling, rafters and roof were damaged in a fire at 2616 W. Main St. Saturday morning, the Medford Fire Department reported.

The occupant, Paul Gardner, was absent at the time.

Flames did considerable damage to the living room and extended to a lean-to shed, foremen said.

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Foreign Countries Represented at SOC

ASHLAND — Eleven foreign countries and 13 foreign students are represented in the final fall term enrollment figures for Southern Oregon College.

Ten other states, including Alaska and Hawaii, contributed 137 more students to the record-breaking total of 2,111 enrolled for the term.

Jackson County, as expected, topped all other counties with 1,110 students, followed by Josephine County with 190; Lane with 176; Klamath with 142; Douglas with 125; and Coos with 63 enrollees. Thirty-two of Oregon's 36 counties are represented.

Foreign countries with students attending include Canada, Congo, Germany, Hong Kong, Iran, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, Portugal, Sierra Leone, and Southern Rhodesia.

Out of state students are registered from Alaska, 6; California, 82; Hawaii, 30; Idaho, 4; Montana, 1; Nevada, 5; Ohio, 2; South Carolina, 1; Washington, 5; and Utah, 1.

Council Approves Purchase of Park Concession Units

The Medford City Council Thursday approved the expenditure of \$1,247.85 to purchase concession equipment at Hawthorne Park.

The equipment includes an ice maker, a hot dog dispenser unit, a carbonator, and numerous soft-drink dispensers. The Medford Swim Association's proposal to pay the city 15 per cent of their gross receipts in 1964 for the operation of the Hawthorne Park concession was also approved.

Public hearings were called for zone changes at 37 Quince St., the northeast corner of Clark and Narraegen Streets, and the east side of Riverside Avenue at Crater Lake Highway.

Included was the annexation of property between the extension of Columbus and Chestnut Streets from Prune Street to the existing city limits.

Other council action included: Variance Is Approved — Approving a variance to erect a direction sign on the northeast corner of Stevens and Royal Streets.

—Granting Pacific Power and Light Company an easement to provide for the extension of approximately three poles to supply electric power for the pump for the water supply at Willow Lake Resort.

—Withdrawing recently annexed territory from the Medford Rural Fire Protection District.

—Accepting two improvement projects—paving streets in Blossom Hill Unit 3, and demolition work for the Federal and Hansen building.

—Commenting on the nine persons arrested by the Medford Police Wednesday and early Thursday. Mayor James Dunlevy said: "By such action this makes Medford an undesirable place for criminals." He also complimented the other law enforcement agencies for their assistance.

Madrigal Singers On Medical Program

The Madrigal Singers of Medford High School under the direction of Lynn Sjolund will be featured on "Adventures in Medicine" at 2:30 o'clock this afternoon over station KRES-TV.

This departure from the usual program format, which is basically a medical panel discussion among physicians and surgeons, is traditional for the program, before Christmas each year, according to Mrs. C. Ivan Burton, moderator.

The Madrigal Singers are appearing for the sixth time as special guests on the show, and their program will be varied and unusual, Mrs. Burton said.

Vandalism Reported By Ashland Police

ASHLAND — Ashland police reported a series of vandalism incidents Friday night.

Someone turned on a fire hydrant on Euclid Street, resulting in silt damage to some yards. A cap off the same fire hydrant was thrown through the windshield of a car owned by M. C. Liminger and Sons, Central Point, police said.

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