



# Press Release

EMBARGOED UNTIL: 12:01AM, Sunday, March 16, 2003

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## Benchmark Report: Progress is Mixed

*Education, Public Safety, Environment, Economy and Health Measures All Show Significant Improvement. Low Income and Rural Oregonians Fare Less Well.*

**Salem (OR)**— An analysis of 90 indicators of well being for Oregon indicates that the state has made progress on a broad range of important social, economic and environmental issues over the past decade.

The report, entitled *2003 Benchmark Performance Report*, gave the state an unequivocal “yes” for progress in education and a “qualified yes” for progress in improving the state’s economy, environment, public safety, and social supports. The group issued a “qualified no” for progress in civic engagement by Oregonians and community development. In every area of assessment, the group found some progress had occurred.

“Despite the bad economy, Oregonians are, on average, better off today than they were ten years ago,” said Vice Chair, and president of Northwest Aluminum, Brett Wilcox. “On the other hand, Oregon is becoming a state of ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’ as good opportunities for less educated and rural Oregonians diminish.”

Some trends will come as no surprise to most Oregonians. The state’s rapid rise in hunger is known far and wide. Others, like Oregon’s steady increase in stream water quality or our dramatically reduced teen pregnancy rate, may surprise readers. Jeff Tryens, executive director of the Progress Board, said that the report provides an opportunity for Oregonians to take stock of how the state is doing. “Benchmark trends point out areas where the state needs to focus and act,” Tryens added.

“The Progress Board believes that having a long-term perspective is key to Oregon’s success in the future,” said Wilcox. “By looking back over the past twelve years, this report allows legislators and other policymakers to put today’s tough issues into better perspective and help determine what approaches are working.”

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According to board member and Clackamas County Commissioner Michael Jordan, “It is important to remember that these assessments reflect how well Oregon, as a state, is achieving the goals set forth in the state’s strategic vision, *Oregon Shines.*” He added, “The assessments are not measures of performance for government agencies, rather they reflect a responsibility we all share.”

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The Progress Board was created by the Oregon Legislature in 1989 to develop a strategic vision for Oregon and monitor progress toward that vision using a set of measures—commonly known as benchmarks—of economic, social, and environmental health for the state. Benchmark Performance Reports assess each benchmark for signs of progress.

The report is available online at [www.econ.state.or.us/opb](http://www.econ.state.or.us/opb). Reports can also be obtained by calling the Progress Board at 503-986-0039 in Salem.

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