



PRESS release

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Oregon Releases 2002 Population Survey

SALEM (OR)—The state of Oregon released the findings of the 2002 Oregon Population Survey today. The telephone survey, conducted by the Northwest Research Group in the summer of 2002, provides a wealth of data on income and other household characteristics, health insurance coverage, educational attainment, commuting choices, savings for retirement and education, child care arrangement, and internet usage. The survey also provides information on the perceptions of Oregonians ranging from the quality of public services to their sense of community.

A summary of the results was presented by Rebecca Elmore-Yalch, President / CEO of Northwest Research Group, Inc. Key findings include –

Oregon Households:

- Household income went up between 1999 and 2001 in actual dollars from \$38,700 to \$40,350. In inflation adjusted 1990 dollars, income increased from \$27,000 to 29,775.
- Two of five Oregon households are non-family – one person living alone or two or more unrelated adults. This is significantly higher than the national average.
- About two-thirds of all Oregon households are owner-occupied which is consistent with the U.S. average and somewhat higher than Western states as a whole.
- Two-thirds of all Oregon households have Internet access – a modest increase of three percent over 2000.

Education:

- The levels of educational attainment have changed little in Oregon since 1996 rising from 29% of residents with a bachelor's degree or more to 30% in 2002 – not a statistically significant change. The percent of Oregonians without a high school degree or equivalent went up from nine percent to eleven percent during the same period.
- Well over 80% of Oregonians are comfortable reading and writing English, but only 63% said they are comfortable solving math problems.

In-Migration:

- Fifty-five percent of all Oregonians were born outside the state. This is a slight increase over 2000.
- About a third of all recent in-migrants (past five years) have a college degree, compared to 24% of longer-term residents.

(more)

Health and Well-being:

- The percent of Oregonians with health insurance dropped from a highest-ever 90% in 2000 to 86% in 2002, while coverage for children dropped from a highest-ever 92% to 90%.
- More than one of ten Oregonians is disabled.

Saving for the Future:

- Two-thirds of employed Oregonians say they are saving for retirement. This percentage varies greatly by household income, with only 33% of low-income households saving.
- Two of five families with children under eighteen report that they are saving for college. Again, this percentage varies greatly with household income.

According to the survey, perceptions of Oregon have changed significantly since 2000. Oregonians felt much more a part of their communities in 2002. Fifty percent of all respondents said they felt part of their community, up from 37% in 2000. However, Oregonians' feelings about their state decreased somewhat, from 89% saying they had a very positive or somewhat positive feeling about the state to 83% expressing positive feelings.

Oregonians' perceptions of the quality of Oregon government services fell significantly between 2000 and 2002. In 2000, 79% of respondents felt that Oregon was doing a very good or somewhat good job in providing government services. In 2002, 65% of Oregonians felt that Oregon was doing a very good or somewhat good job.

Not surprisingly, the area of government service that fell the most was the ability to create jobs. The ranking fell from 78% of Oregonians ranking that government function as very good or somewhat good to just 49%. Other services that saw a significant drop in public approval were K-12 education, falling from 71% to 61% approval, and access to affordable health care, which fell from 66% to 58%.

Providing parks and open space topped the approval list with 93% approval and community colleges with 88% approval. Managing growth and controlling crime and drug use were the three public functions that improved the most between 2000 and 2002.

Every two years since 1990, the *Oregon Population Survey* has been used to ask Oregonians a battery of questions covering areas ranging from child care, to employment, to technology use. The result is an in-depth picture of the lives, families and jobs of Oregonians and the state's quality of life.

The *2002 Oregon Population Survey* was conducted during the spring and summer of 2002. Approximately 4,800 household representatives were interviewed statewide. (Some questions were answered by a smaller number of respondents.)

PLEASE NOTE: The PowerPoint slide show summarizing the finding is available at www.econ.state.or.us/opb. The complete *2002 Oregon Population Survey* data will be online after January 27, 2003 through the Office of Economic Analysis at www.oea.das.state.or.us/. The data are also organized by region and race/ethnicity.

More in-depth analyses of the data will be released throughout the spring and summer of 2003.