



Multnomah County Oregon

Board of Commissioners & Agenda

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REVISED

FEBRUARY 17 & 19, 2009

BOARD MEETINGS

FASTLOOK AGENDA ITEMS OF INTEREST

Pg 2	9:00 a.m. Tuesday Budget Overview Work Session
Pg 2	9:30 a.m. Thursday Opportunity for Public Comment on Non-Agenda Matters
Pg 2	9:40 a.m. Thursday Public Hearing and Consideration of an ORDER Approving the Annexation of Territory to Dunthorpe-Riverdale County Service District
Pg 3	9:50 a.m. Declaration of Cooperation – Sandy River Connections Concept Plan
Pg 3	10:20 a.m. Resolution Approving the Recommendation of the Policy Advisory Group Regarding the Locally Preferred Alternative for the Sellwood Bridge Project

Thursday meetings of the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners are cable-cast live and taped and may be seen by Cable subscribers in Multnomah County at the following times:

Thursday, 9:30 AM, (LIVE) Channel 30

Saturday, 10:00 AM, Channel 29

Sunday, 11:00 AM, Channel 30

Tuesday, 8:15 PM, Channel 29

Produced through MetroEast Community Media

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or: <http://www.metroeast.org>

Tuesday, February 17, 2009 - 9:00 AM
Multnomah Building, Sixth Floor Commissioners Conference Room 635

WORK SESSION

9:00 to 9:45 General Fund Revenue and Expenditure Forecast Update
9:45 to 11:45 State and Local Revenue Options Briefing

Thursday, February 19, 2009 - 9:30 AM
Multnomah Building, First Floor Commissioners Boardroom 100
501 SE Hawthorne Boulevard, Portland

REGULAR MEETING

REGULAR AGENDA

DEPARTMENT OF COUNTY ATTORNEY – 9:30 AM

UC-1 RESOLUTION Declaring a Vacancy in the Office of County Auditor,
Calling an Election for May 19, 2009, and Setting the Candidate Filing
Deadline for March 10, 2009

PUBLIC COMMENT - 9:30 AM

Opportunity for Public Comment on non-agenda matters. Testimony is
limited to three minutes per person. Fill out a speaker form available in the
Boardroom and turn it into the Board Clerk.

NON-DEPARTMENTAL - 9:30 AM

- R-1 Appointment of Heidi Beebe to the Multnomah County LIBRARY
ADVISORY BOARD
- R-2 Appointment of Kara Thallon, Joseph Bennett Jr., and David Barber to the
Multnomah County Food Services Advisory Board

SERVICE DISTRICT - 9:40 AM

*(Recess as the Board of County Commissioners and convene as the governing body
for DUNTHORPE RIVERDALE SANITARY SERVICE DISTRICT NO. 1)*

R-3 Acting as the Governing Body of the DUNTHORPE RIVERDALE SANITARY SERVICE DISTRICT, Public Hearing and Consideration of the District's Endorsing a Petition to Annex a Single Parcel of Land to the District Pursuant to ORS 198.857

R-4 PUBLIC HEARING and Consideration of an ORDER Approving the Annexation of Territory to Dunthorpe-Riverdale County Service District
(Adjourn as the governing body for Dunthorpe Riverdale Sanitary Service District No. 1 and reconvene as BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS)

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES – 9:50 AM

R-5 Declaration of Cooperation - Sandy River Connections Concept Plan

COMMISSION ON CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY – 10:00 AM

R-6 NOTICE OF INTENT to Apply for Department of Justice-Safe Havens Supervised Visitation Safe Exchange Funding for Developing Supervised Visitation Services for Victims/Batterers and their Children

R-7 NOTICE OF INTENT to Apply for Oregon Community Foundation Grant to Fund the Early Childhood Trauma Response System

NON-DEPARTMENTAL – 10:15 AM

R-8 Appointment of Bruce Whiting to the HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES – 10:20 AM

R-9 RESOLUTION Approving the Recommendation of the Policy Advisory Group Regarding the Locally Preferred Alternative for the Sellwood Bridge Project

BOARD COMMENT

Opportunity (as time allows) for Commissioners to provide informational comments to Board and public on non-agenda items of interest or to discuss legislative issues.



MULTNOMAH COUNTY
AGENDA PLACEMENT REQUEST (revised 09/22/08)

Board Clerk Use Only

Meeting Date: 02/17/09
Agenda Item #: WS-1
Est. Start Time: 9:00 AM
Date Submitted: 02/09/097

Agenda Title: **General Fund Revenue and Expenditure Forecast Update**

Note: If Ordinance, Resolution, Order or Proclamation, provide exact title. For all other submissions, provide a clearly written title sufficient to describe the action requested.

Requested Meeting Date:	<u>February 17, 2009</u>	Amount of Time Needed:	<u>45 minutes</u>
Department:	<u>County Management</u>	Division:	<u>Budget Office</u>
Contact(s):	<u>Karyne Kieta</u>		
Phone:	<u>503-988-3312</u>	Ext.	<u>22457</u>
Presenter(s):	<u>Mike Jaspin</u>	I/O Address:	<u>503/501</u>

General Information

1. What action are you requesting from the Board?

Attend a briefing session to hear an update of the County's five-year General Fund revenue and expenditure forecast. No decisions will be made; this is an information briefing only.

2. Please provide sufficient background information for the Board and the public to understand this issue. Please note which Program Offer this action affects and how it impacts the results.

County Financial Policies recognize the importance of developing and maintaining a five-year financial forecast for the General Fund in order for the Board to be able to assess the long-term financial implications of current and proposed policies and programs.

The forecast presentation will provide an update of available funding for FY 10 and beyond; provide context for evaluating financial risk and for assessing the County's ability to sustain services; and identify key variables that might change the level of revenues or expenditures.

3. Explain the fiscal impact (current year and ongoing).

N/A—briefing only.

4. Explain any legal and/or policy issues involved.

N/A—briefing only.

5. Explain any citizen and/or other government participation that has or will take place.

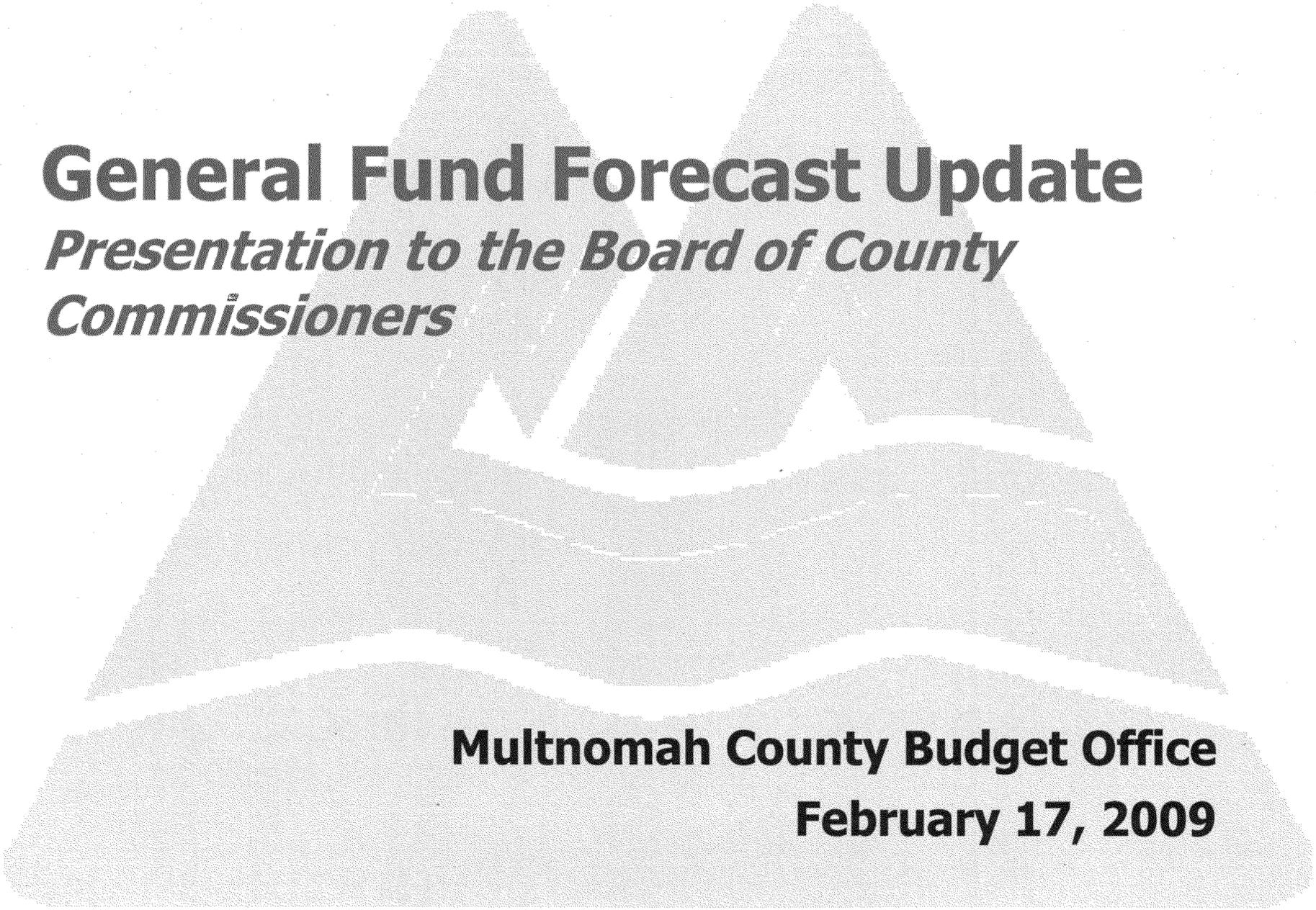
N/A—briefing only.

Required Signature

**Elected Official or
Department/
Agency Director:**

Carol M. Ford

Date: 02/09/09



General Fund Forecast Update
*Presentation to the Board of County
Commissioners*

Multnomah County Budget Office
February 17, 2009

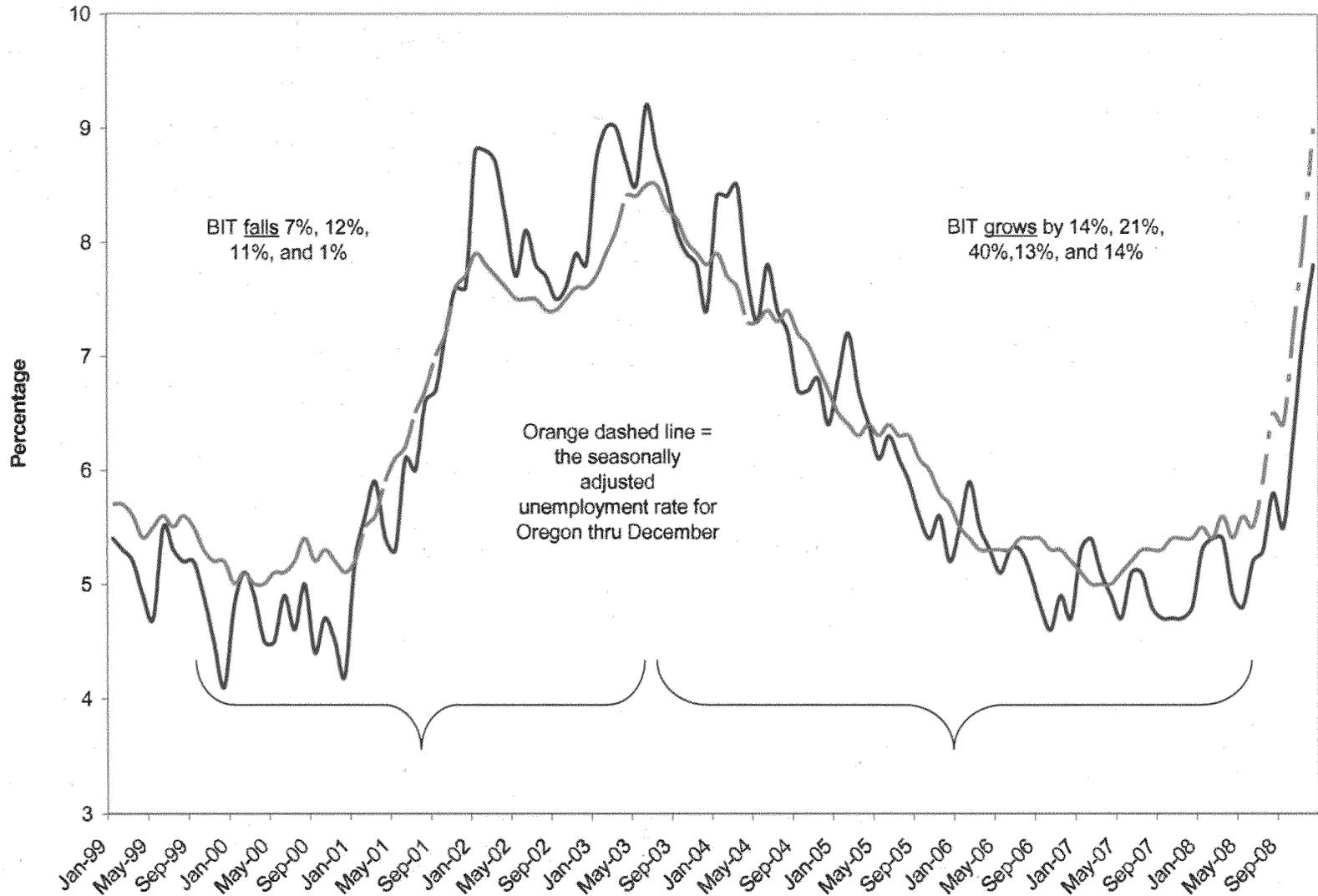
Introduction

- FY 2009 -- The Bad & Not So Bad...
 - FY 2009 BIT Collections & Forecast
 - FY 2009 Ending Balance & One-Time-Only Funds for FY 2010
- Economic Overview
- FY 2010 General Fund Forecast
 - Operating Deficit Overview
 - Revenues
 - Expenditure Assumptions
 - ✓ No Change from October Forecast
 - ✓ CPI/COLA
 - Forecast Risks & Issues
- Summary & Questions



Unemployment Rate & BIT

Unemployment Rate - Multnomah County
(Thru December 2008 - Not Seasonally Adjusted)



FY 2009 BIT Collections

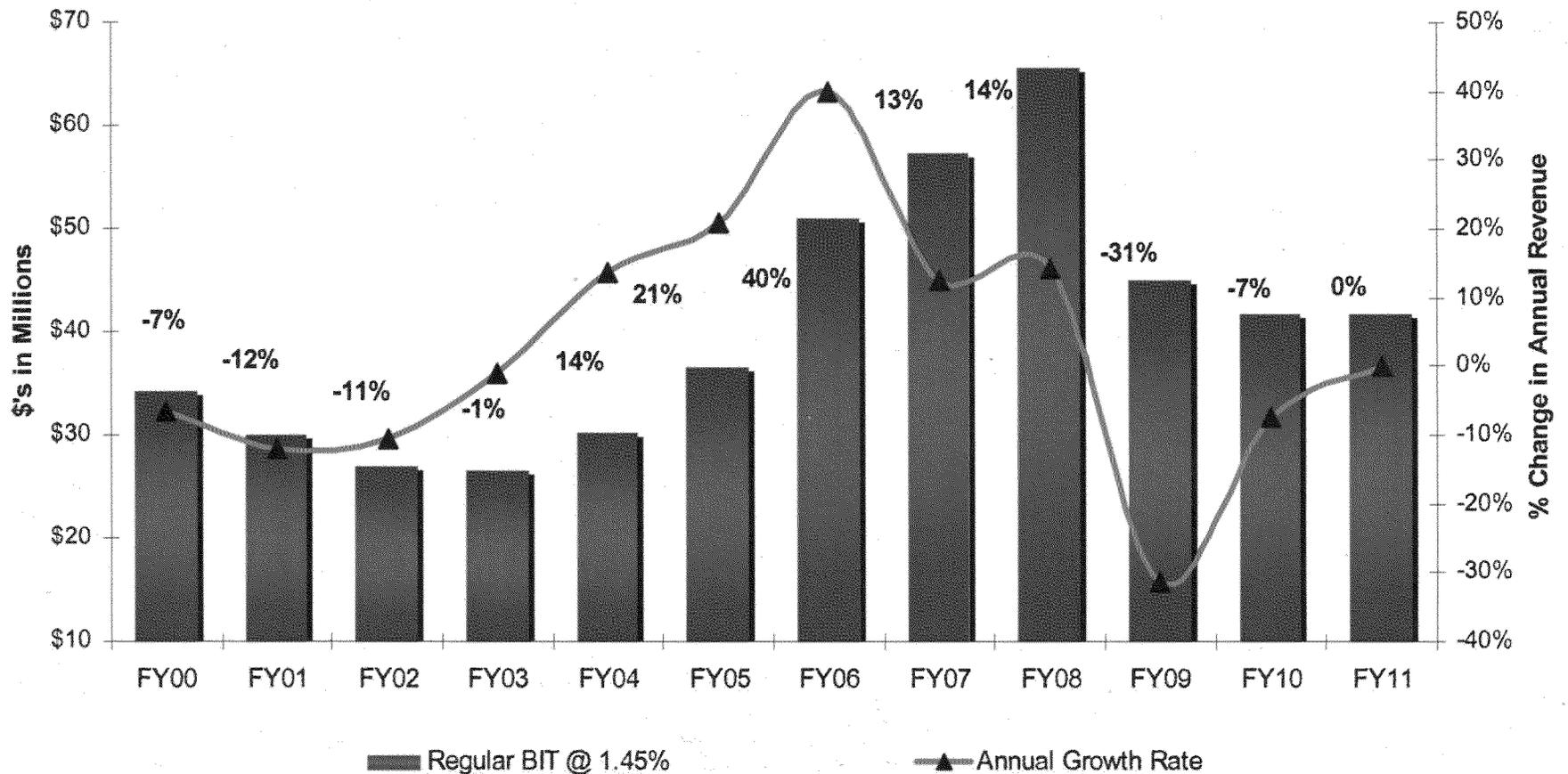
- FY 2009 BIT Collections – Thru January
 - ✓ Quarterly – Down 6.8%
 - ✓ Yearly – Down 17.2%
 - ✓ Refunds – Up 182.7%
 - ✓ Overall – Down 26.2%
 - ✓ Overall – Down \$6.4 million
- FY 2009 Budget Assumed 16% Drop (\$10.8 million)
- Now Assuming 31% Drop (\$20.6 million)
- Will Update after April Returns



Annual BIT Collections

Annual BIT Collections

(FY 2000 to FY 2008 Actuals; FY 2009 Estimated; FY 2010 & 11 Forecast)



FY 2009 Ending Balance

	Amount
Additional BWC in FY 09 (from FY 08)	8,928,428
Wapato Contingency (less \$338,546 for MCDC)	5,795,268
<u>Revenue</u>	
Property Tax	1,747,797
BIT	(9,814,244)
Timber/Secure Schools	1,112,989
Video Lottery	(931,063)
US Marshal	1,175,558
	(6,708,963)
<u>Other Revenue</u>	
CAFFA/A&T Supplement	(300,000)
Recording Fees	(1,935,000)
City of Portland/Chronic Offender	(914,000)
Interest Earnings	(3,060,000)
Less TRAN costs	880,000
Revenue Reserve	3,000,000
	(2,329,000)
Departmental Spending Targets (<i>expenditure side</i>)	10,258,367
Other (A&T, Passports, BIT Payments, etc.)	984,064
General Fund FY 2009 Ending Balance (excluding reserve)	16,928,164
Lower Reserves to 10% per Board Financial Policy	1,086,348
Total OTO Funds Available for FY 2010	18,014,512



Economic Overview

■ National

- ✓ Credit Markets & Financial Sector
- ✓ Weakening economy (Retail sales, industrial production, unemployment, inflation/energy prices, transportation sector)

■ State

- ✓ Employment & income taxes

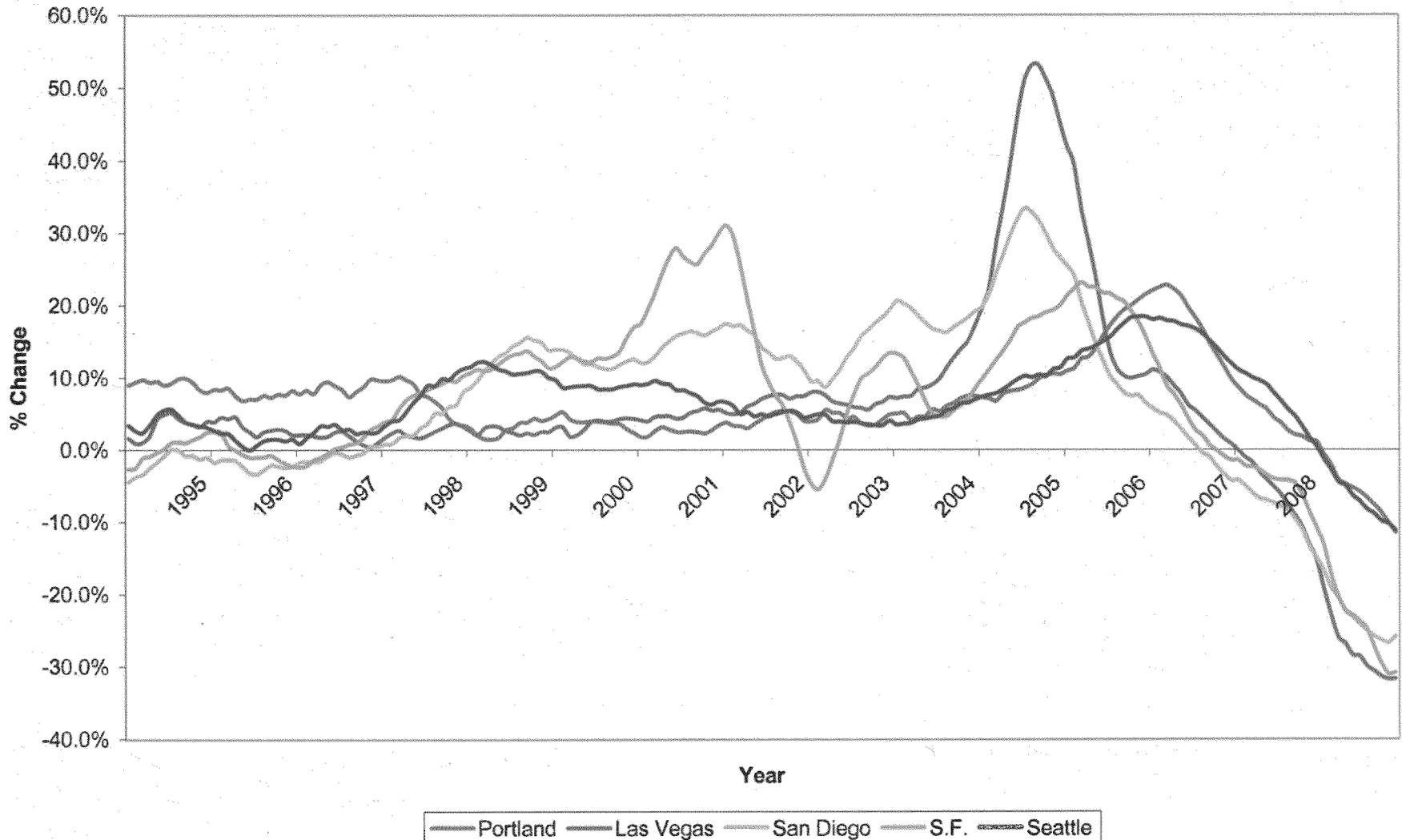
■ Local

- ✓ Housing (prices, defaults, recording fees, builder bankruptcy, bank failures)
- ✓ Unemployment



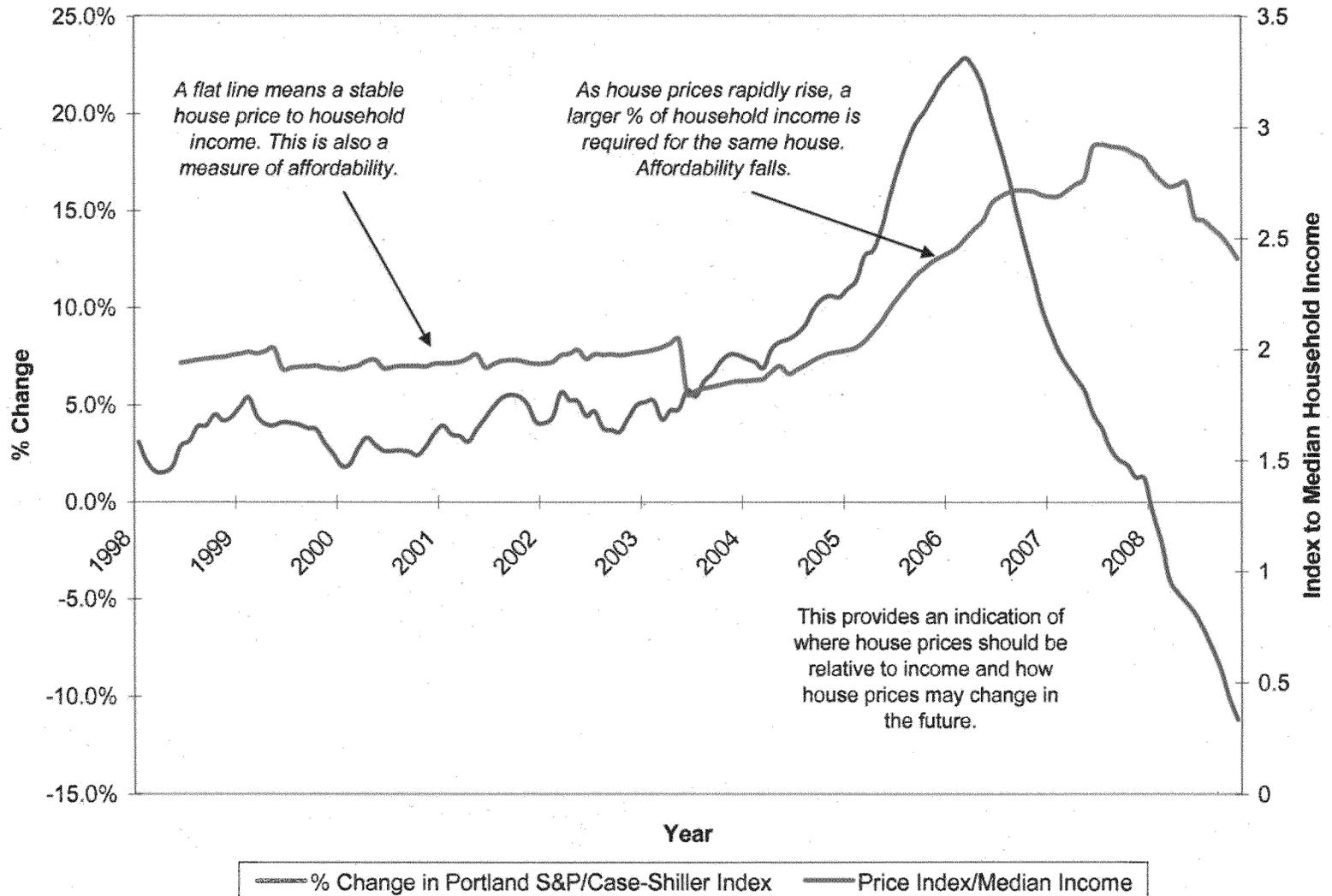
Economic Overview

Monthly Year-Over-Year % Change
Based on S&P/Case-Shiller Home Price Index Thru November 2008



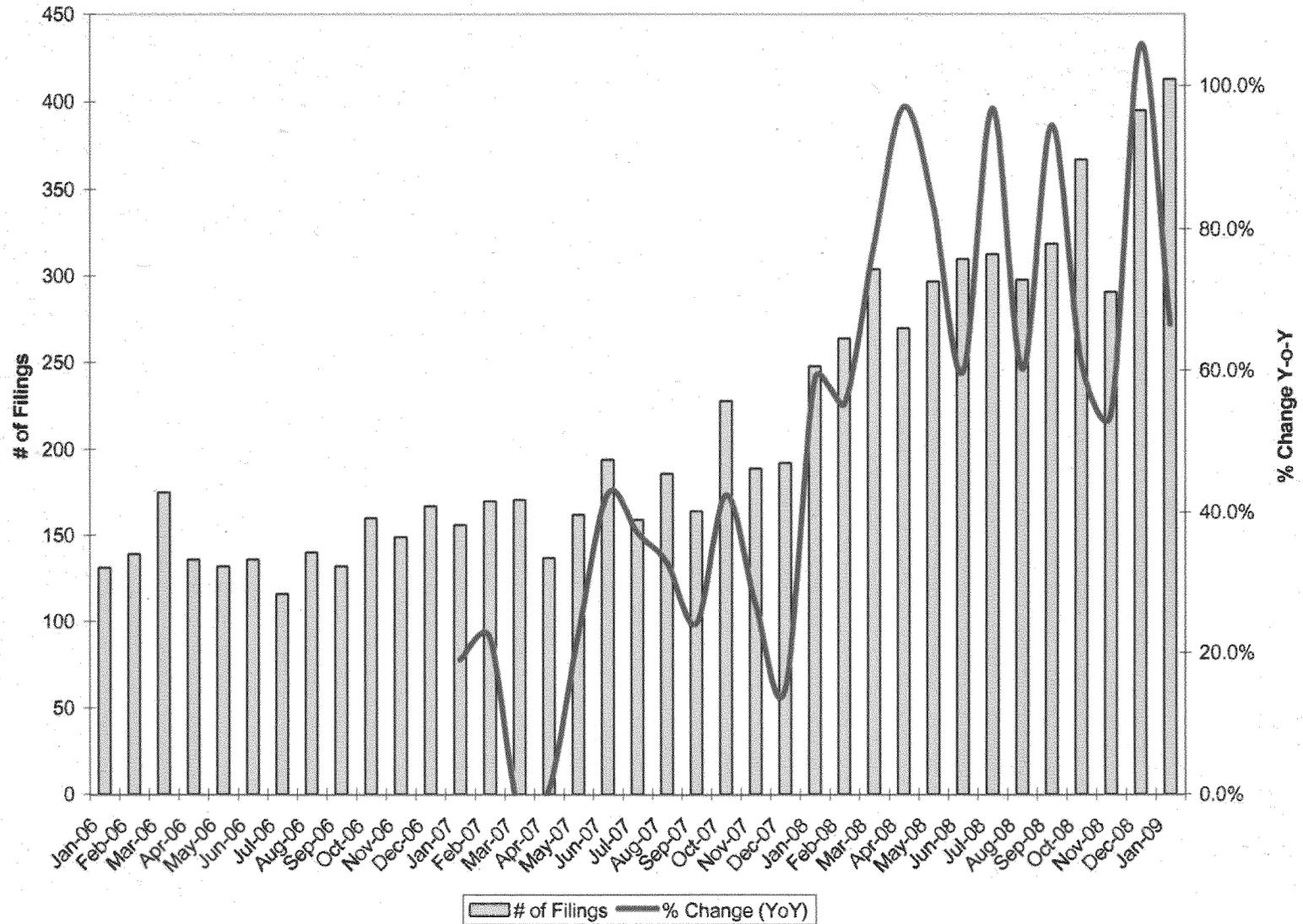
Economic Overview

% Change in Portland S&P/Case-Shiller House Price Index and Index to Median Household Income



Economic Overview

Default Filings in Multnomah County & Year-Over-Year % Change (Thru January)



FY 2010 General Fund Forecast

- The FY 2010 forecast assumes a severe recession with rising unemployment, tight credit, falling real estate values, and general uncertainty and fear.
- Ongoing gap between revenues and expenditures of **\$36.5 million.**
- Explained by:
 - ✓ Reduced Revenues (\$19.0 million)
 - ✓ An ongoing structural deficit (\$5.3 million)
 - ✓ OTO funds in FY 09 supporting ongoing programs (\$4.2 million)
 - ✓ Additional FY 09 spending & annualized program costs (\$4.3 million)
 - ✓ Higher personnel costs (\$3.7 million)



Operating Deficits

- FY 2010 operating deficit equals \$36.5 million
- FY 2011 operating deficit grows to \$45.9 million
- Change in forecast driven mainly by BIT, with Property Tax and Lottery accounting for remainder
- Does not include State or Federal Impacts

General Fund Operating Deficits for FY 2010 & 2011

	October Base <i>(Moderate Recession)</i>	October Pessimistic <i>(More Severe Recession)</i>	February 2009
FY 2010 Operating Deficit	23,857,487	28,870,849	36,533,909
FY 2011 Operating Deficit	30,132,862	35,317,799	45,866,066

Note: FY 2011 operating deficit assumes no action taken in FY 2010



General Fund Revenue Forecast

- FY 2010 ongoing General Fund Revenues \$332.5 million.
 - ✓ Property Tax (66.5%) - \$221.2 million
 - ✓ BIT (12.8%) - \$42.5 million
 - ✓ Motor Vehicle Rental Tax (3.8%) - \$12.7 million
 - ✓ Video Lottery, Liquor & Cigarette Tax (2.8%) - \$9.2 million
 - ✓ A&T Recording/CAFFA (2.0%) - \$6.7 million
 - ✓ Other – Indirect (\$13.0 million), US Marshal (125 beds), Juvenile Detention, City of Portland Chronic Offender



General Fund Revenue Forecast

Major General Fund Revenue Sources

Excludes ITAX Revenue & Beginning Working Capital (BWC)

	Actual FY 2008	Adopted FY 2009	Forecast FY 2009	Forecast FY 2010	Forecast FY 2011	Forecast FY 2012
Property Taxes	\$ 210,236,715	\$ 215,402,002	\$ 217,149,799	\$ 221,248,041	\$ 226,553,162	\$ 235,058,839
Business Income Tax ³	65,650,000	55,664,744	45,850,500	42,528,000	42,528,000	44,654,400
Motor Vehicle Rental	13,481,426	13,212,272	13,212,272	12,672,540	12,989,354	13,379,034
Recording Fees/CAFFA Grant	8,155,190	8,338,200	6,103,200	6,720,000	7,560,000	7,921,200
State Shared Revenues ¹	9,597,728	9,966,817	9,035,754	9,197,471	9,362,528	9,545,244
US Marshal Per Diem	5,938,140	5,803,125	6,978,683	5,917,188	6,091,703	6,271,454
Interest Earnings	5,072,730	4,960,000	1,900,000	2,150,000	2,193,000	2,236,860
Timber/Secure Schools Act	1,388,216	0	1,112,989	1,001,690	902,758	556,495
	\$ 319,520,145	\$ 313,347,160	\$ 301,343,197	\$ 301,434,929	\$ 308,180,504	\$ 319,623,525
All Other General Fund ²	28,034,196	31,658,094	30,285,322	31,029,264	31,680,264	28,955,130
Total	\$ 347,554,341	\$ 345,005,254	\$ 331,628,519	\$ 332,464,193	\$ 339,860,768	\$ 348,578,655
% of Total Revenue	91.93%	90.82%	90.87%	90.67%	90.68%	91.69%
% Change in Ongoing Revenue		-0.73%	-3.88%	0.25%	2.22%	2.57%

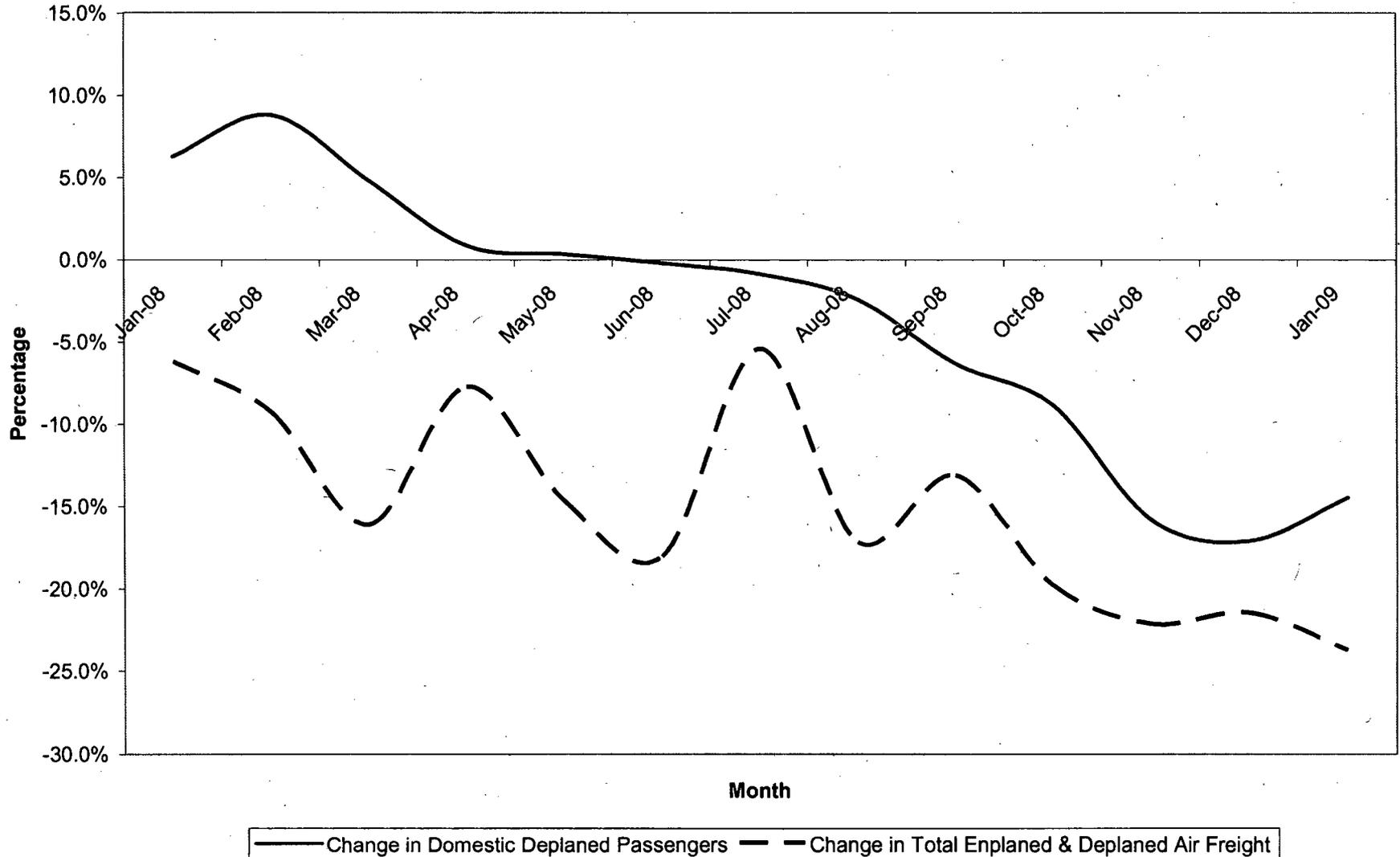
Notes:

1. State Shared Revenues include Video Lottery and OLCC, Cigarette, and Amusement Device Taxes
2. All Other General Fund Exclude ITAX Revenue and Beginning Working Capital (BWC)
3. Not Adjusted for BIT Administration Cost Accounting Change

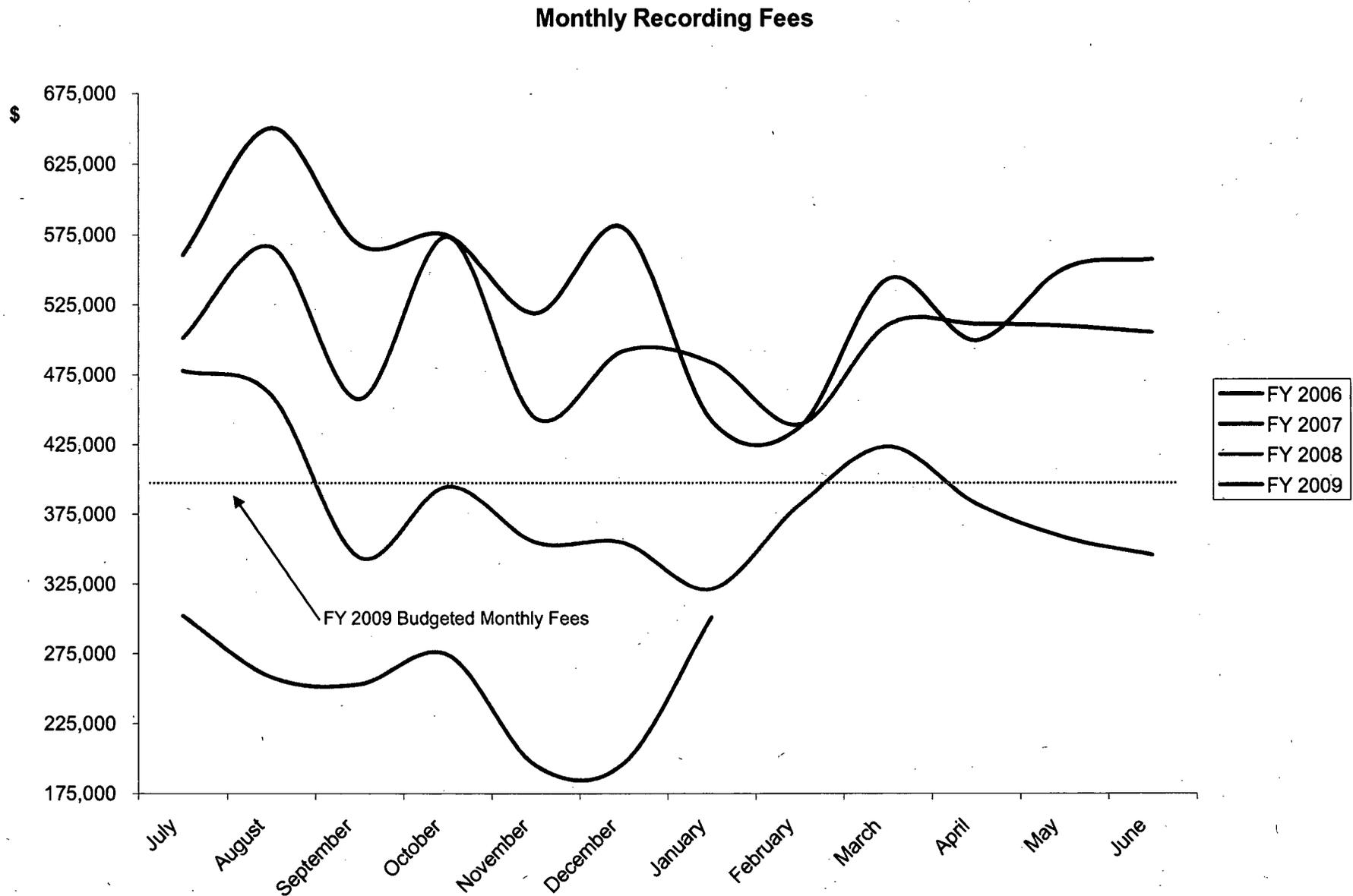


PDX Passenger & Freight Statistics

Year-Over-Year Change in Passengers & Freight at PDX

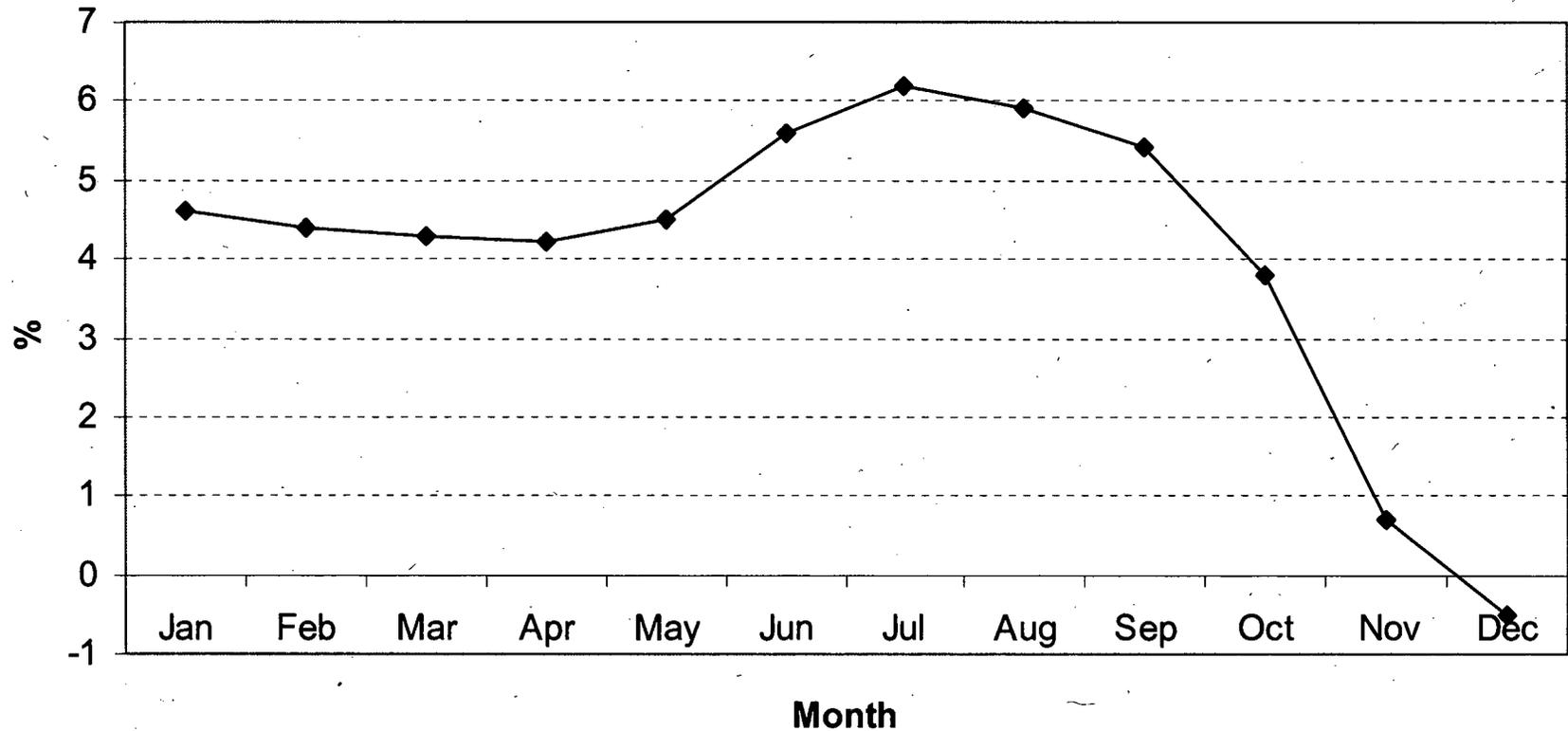


Monthly Recording Fees



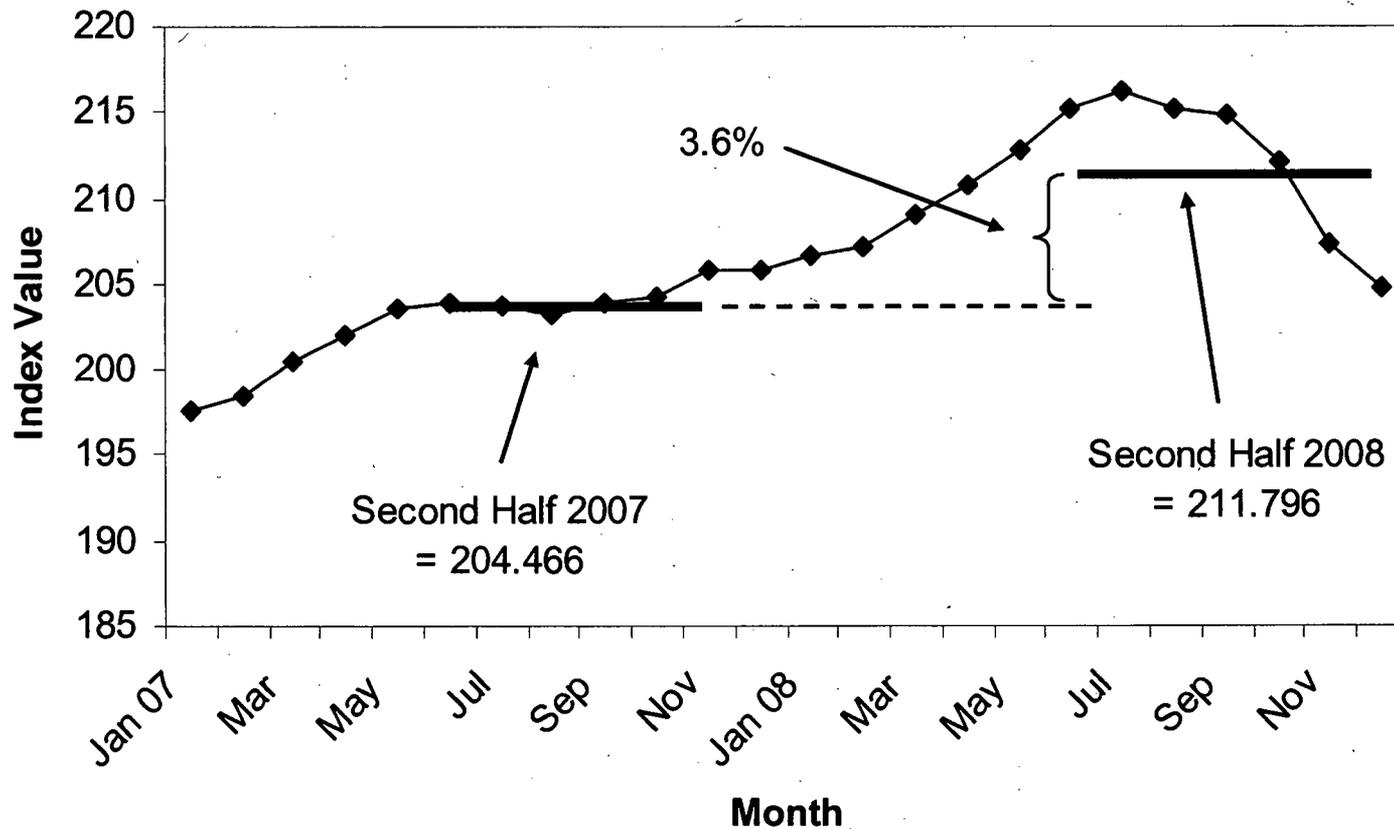
Expenditure Assumptions - CPI

Year-over-Year Percentage Change in the CPI - Urban Wage Earners & Clerical Workers for 2008
U.S. City Average - Not Seasonally Adjusted



Expenditure Assumptions – CPI/COLA

CPI - Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers 2007-2008
U.S. City Average - Not Seasonally Adjusted



Forecast Risks & Issues

- Economic conditions continue to worsen
 - ✓ BIT
 - ✓ Length and severity of recession – property tax compression.
 - ✓ FY 2009 State budget impacts & OTO resources for FY 2010
- State Budget
- Internal/Local Issues
 - ✓ A&T IT System Financing
 - ✓ East County Justice Center
 - ✓ Wapato
 - ✓ Bridge Loan Repayment
 - ✓ Retiree Benefits Liability
 - ✓ Others



Summary

- FY 2009 budget okay
 - ✓ Lower BIT & Lottery collections.
 - ✓ Offset by additional BWC, Departmental under spending, and not using Wapato Contingency funds.
 - ✓ Roughly \$18 million of OTO funds from FY 2009 available for FY 2010.
- FY 2010 operating deficit of \$36.5 million.
- FY 2011 operating deficit likely to be \$45.9 million.
- Downside risk to revenue forecast – economy, state impacts, and increasing property tax compression.
- Questions?
- More info @ www.co.multnomah.or.us/BudgetFY2010





MULTNOMAH COUNTY
AGENDA PLACEMENT REQUEST (revised 09/22/08)

Board Clerk Use Only

Meeting Date: 02/17/09
Agenda Item #: WS-1
Est. Start Time: 9:45 AM
Date Submitted: 02/11/09

Agenda Title: State and Local Revenue Options Briefing

Note: If Ordinance, Resolution, Order or Proclamation, provide exact title. For all other submissions, provide a clearly written title sufficient to describe the action requested.

Requested Meeting Date: February 17, 2009 **Amount of Time Needed:** 2 Hours
Department: Non-Departmental **Division:** Chair's Office
Contact(s): Rhys Scholes
Phone: 988-5273 **Ext.** 85273 **I/O Address:** 503/6/Chairs
Presenter(s): Rhys Scholes, Mark Campbell, Phillip Kennedy-Wong, Sally Brown

General Information

1. What action are you requesting from the Board?

No action.

2. Please provide sufficient background information for the Board and the public to understand this issue. Please note which Program Offer this action affects and how it impacts the results.

This is an informational briefing on state and local revenue options. The intention is to briefly survey the full range of options and to include information on topics under discussion in the Oregon Legislature as well as historical and technical background on these options.

3. Explain the fiscal impact (current year and ongoing).

None

4. Explain any legal and/or policy issues involved.

Because Multnomah County and the State of Oregon are facing budget shortfalls that will require reductions to public services it is important to understand the full range of options available to state and local government to mitigate those budget shortfalls.

5. Explain any citizen and/or other government participation that has or will take place.

Multnomah County is working with state and local partners to examine revenue options.

Required Signature

**Elected Official or
Department/
Agency Director:**

TED WHEELER

Date: 02/11/09

First Draft Outline
February 17 Revenue Options Briefing

Part 1 – State General Fund Revenue

What measures is the Oregon Legislature considering this session that might mitigate the state budget shortfall (and resulting loss of public services in Multnomah County?)

- A. Corporate Minimum Tax
- B. Federal Tax disconnect
- C. Personal income tax changes

Part 2 – Dedicated State Taxes

What measures is the legislature considering that might provide funding for specific public services in Multnomah County?

- A. Cigarette Tax
- B. Gas Tax/Vehicle Registration Fee
- C. Beer/Wine Tax

Part 3 – Property Tax Changes

What measures is the legislature considering that might increase the amount of property taxes that Multnomah County can collect with its existing rates?

- A. Property Tax Limitation Reform
- B. Urban Renewal Reform
- C. Historic Property expenditure sunset

Part 4- State Preemptions

What revenue sources could become available to Multnomah County if the legislature changed state law to remove a preemption?

- A. Cigarette Tax
- B. Alcohol Taxes
- C. Real Estate Transfer Tax

Part 5 – Local Options

What additional revenue sources are currently available to Multnomah County?

- A. Local Option Levy
- B. Creation of a special taxing district
- C. Utility taxes
- D. Car rental tax increase
- E. Gasoline tax increase
- F. Additional excise taxes
- G. Changes to BIT structure or rates

first draft

Property Tax Limitation Reform: One Percent Limitation

Across Oregon, public services are being reduced or eliminated because the cost of providing the services is greater than the revenue available. At the same time, some taxpayers are paying effective tax rates that are three times higher than rates paid by other property owners for the same services in the same jurisdiction. Property tax limitation measures passed in 1990 and in 1997 have reduced the amount of property taxes that can be collected and they have created winners and losers among property tax payers. The disparate treatment of taxpayers comes from Measure 50, a complex constitutional amendment referred by the Oregon Legislature and passed by voters in 1997.

What did Measure 50 do?

Measure 50 shifted the basis for paying property taxes away from the real value of property as determined by the free market to an artificial value calculated by a legislatively created formula. Measure 50 mandated that county tax assessors set a Maximum Assessed Value (MAV) for properties that is based on a 10% reduction from their 1995 Real Market Value (RMV) and subsequently increased by 3% per year.

The one percent solution would make property taxes proportional to market value

Under the current law, effective tax rates (the amount of tax paid as a percentage of the value of the property) vary a great deal based largely on the history of the property and the neighborhood. Returning to a property tax system based directly on market value would make taxes more fair for everybody.

The current one and a half percent limitation applies to about fifty percent of value

This proposal would lower the tax rate by a third but it would nearly double the value to which that rate was applied.

Over the long term, it is better for funding for public services to be connected to the real value of property

Reforming property tax limitation requires a vote of the people

One percent limitation would require an amendment to the Oregon Constitution and thus a statewide vote.

draft

Property Tax Limitation Reform: Minimum Assessed Value

Across Oregon, public services are being reduced or eliminated because the cost of providing the services is greater than the revenue available. At the same time, some taxpayers are paying effective tax rates that are three times higher than rates paid by other property owners for the same services in the same jurisdiction. Property tax limitation measures passed in 1990 and in 1997 have reduced the amount of property taxes that can be collected and they have created winners and losers among property tax payers. The disparate treatment of taxpayers comes from Measure 50, a complex constitutional amendment referred by the Oregon Legislature and passed by voters in 1997.

What did Measure 50 do?

Measure 50 shifted the basis for paying property taxes away from the real value of property as determined by the free market to an artificial value calculated by a legislatively created formula. Measure 50 mandated that county tax assessors set a Maximum Assessed Value (MAV) for properties that is based on a 10% reduction from their 1995 Real Market Value (RMV) and subsequently increased by 3% per year.

Creation of a Minimum Assessed Value would reduce unfairness by narrowing disparities

As noted above, some taxpayers are charged based on more than 90% of their property's actual value while others pay on less than 30%. Because taxes due are based on the tax rate multiplied by the assessed value this results in a large disparity in taxes between properties of similar actual market value, taxed at the same rate, but with very different assessed value.

Creation of a Minimum Assessed Value would reduce disparities by creating a floor and a ceiling for assessment ratios. Under this proposal Oregon would move to requiring that **assessed value** (which are multiplied by the tax rate to determine tax due) **must be no less than 50% of market value but no more than 75%.**

Under the current law, buyers often pay taxes on less than half of the purchase price of property. This proposal would tax property that has been purchased at 75% of its market value.

Under this proposal, property taxes would still be limited. Many properties would pay taxes based on half of their market value and every residential and commercial property would be guaranteed at least a 25% reduction from real market value. The 1.5% property tax rate limits from Ballot Measure 5 in 1990 would continue to apply.

Reforming property tax limitation requires a vote of the people

Creation of a Minimum Assessed Value would require an amendment to the Oregon Constitution and thus a statewide vote.

draft

Property Tax Limitation Reform: Reset on Sale

Across Oregon, public services are being reduced or eliminated because the cost of providing the services is greater than the revenue available. At the same time, some taxpayers are paying effective tax rates that are three times higher than rates paid by other property owners for the same services in the same jurisdiction. Property tax limitation measures passed in 1990 and in 1997 have reduced the amount of property taxes that can be collected and they have created winners and losers among property tax payers. The disparate treatment of taxpayers comes from Measure 50, a complex constitutional amendment referred by the Oregon Legislature and passed by voters in 1997.

What did Measure 50 do?

Measure 50 shifted the basis for paying property taxes away from the real value of property as determined by the free market to an artificial value calculated by a legislatively created formula. Measure 50 mandated that county tax assessors set a Maximum Assessed Value (MAV) for properties that is based on a 10% reduction from their 1995 Real Market Value (RMV) and subsequently increased by 3% per year.

Why did voters support Measure 50?

Voters passed Measure 5 to limit tax rates in 1990, but the real estate boom pushed up values and that meant that taxes on homeowners went up even though rates were limited. A particular concern of voters was the problem of homeowners on fixed incomes being "taxed out of their homes."

Reset on Sale would protect current homeowners

This proposal could not tax anybody out of their home, because it only changes taxes when the home is sold. And then it would protect the new buyers by setting the assessed (taxable) value at 75% of the real market value.

Homebuyers have choices

Part of buying a home is deciding what is affordable. Homebuyers would know in advance that the **taxable value of a new home is 75% of its market value**

Property taxes would still be limited

Every property would be guaranteed at least a 25% reduction from real market value. The 1.5% property tax rate limits from Ballot Measure 5 in 1990 would continue to apply.

Reforming property tax limitation requires a vote of the people

Creation of a Minimum Assessed Value would require an amendment to the Oregon Constitution and thus a statewide vote.

Multnomah County

Revised Assessed Values to 75% of RMV Ratio if the Prop Sold in 2008

	# of accts	Original AV	New AV if moved to 75%	Differance of AV Adj.	Orig Taxes	New Taxes	Differance in Taxes
Residential - (PC 1xx, 4xx, 8xx, 009, 019)	11,065	1,637,543,450	2,539,235,276	901,691,826	33,441,915	50,136,134	16,694,219
Commercial - (PC 2xx, 7xx)	500	398,688,320	725,580,577	326,892,257	8,113,683	12,595,165	4,481,482
Totals	11,565	2,036,231,770	3,264,815,853	1,228,584,083	41,555,598	62,731,299	21,175,701

Multnomah County

Revised Assessed Values within 50% & 75% AV/RMV Ratio

			New AV if moved to 50% -	Differance of			
	# of accts	Current AV	75%	AV Adj.	Orig Taxes	New Taxes	Differance in Taxes
Residential - (PC 1xx, 4xx, 8xx, 009, 019)							
AV < 50% of Mkt - M50 Raised to 50% of M5	108,923	13,594,502,300	16,607,303,170	3,012,800,870	285,990,940	349,479,443	63,478,443
AV Between 50% - 75%	120,890	20,401,553,030	20,401,553,030	0	405,193,543	405,193,543	0
AV > 75% of AV - M50 Lowered to 75% of M5	11,399	961,820,220	870,604,988	-91,215,232	17,095,205	16,340,389	-754,816
Totals	241,212	34,957,875,550	37,879,461,188	2,921,585,638	708,279,688	771,013,375	62,723,627
Commercial - (PC 2xx, 7xx)							
AV < 50% of Mkt - M50 Raised to 50% of M5	12,686	6,362,107,910	8,176,109,885	1,814,001,975	133,194,001	171,182,356	37,941,070
AV Between 50% - 75%	3,257	3,784,065,850	3,784,065,850	0	75,686,639	75,686,639	0
AV > 75% of AV - M50 Lowered to 75% of M5	681	1,034,671,450	895,050,710	-139,620,740	18,393,494	17,727,859	-665,635
Totals	16,624	11,180,845,210	12,855,226,445	1,674,381,235	227,274,134	264,596,854	37,275,435

Homes of equal value pay very different amounts of taxes

... and one possible adjustment

Each home has a REAL MARKET VALUE of \$400,000. The example property tax rate is \$22 per thousand

CURRENTLY UNDER MEASURE 50:				<u>WITH MINIMUM ASSESSED VALUE</u>	
<u>ASSESSED VALUE</u>	<u>TAXES</u>	<u>EFFECTIVE TAX RATE</u>	<u>CPR</u>	<u>NEW CPR</u>	<u>NEW TAXES</u>
A. \$320,000	\$7040	\$17.60 per Thousand	80%	75%	\$6600
B. \$240,000	\$5280	\$13.20 per Thousand	60%	60%	\$5280
C. \$200,000	\$4400	\$11.00 per Thousand	50%	50%	\$4400
D. \$160,000	\$3520	\$8.80 per Thousand	40%	50%	\$4400
E. \$80,000	\$1760	\$4.40 per Thousand	20%	50%	\$4400

Revenue Ideas - Rough Estimate of Amounts to Be Raised

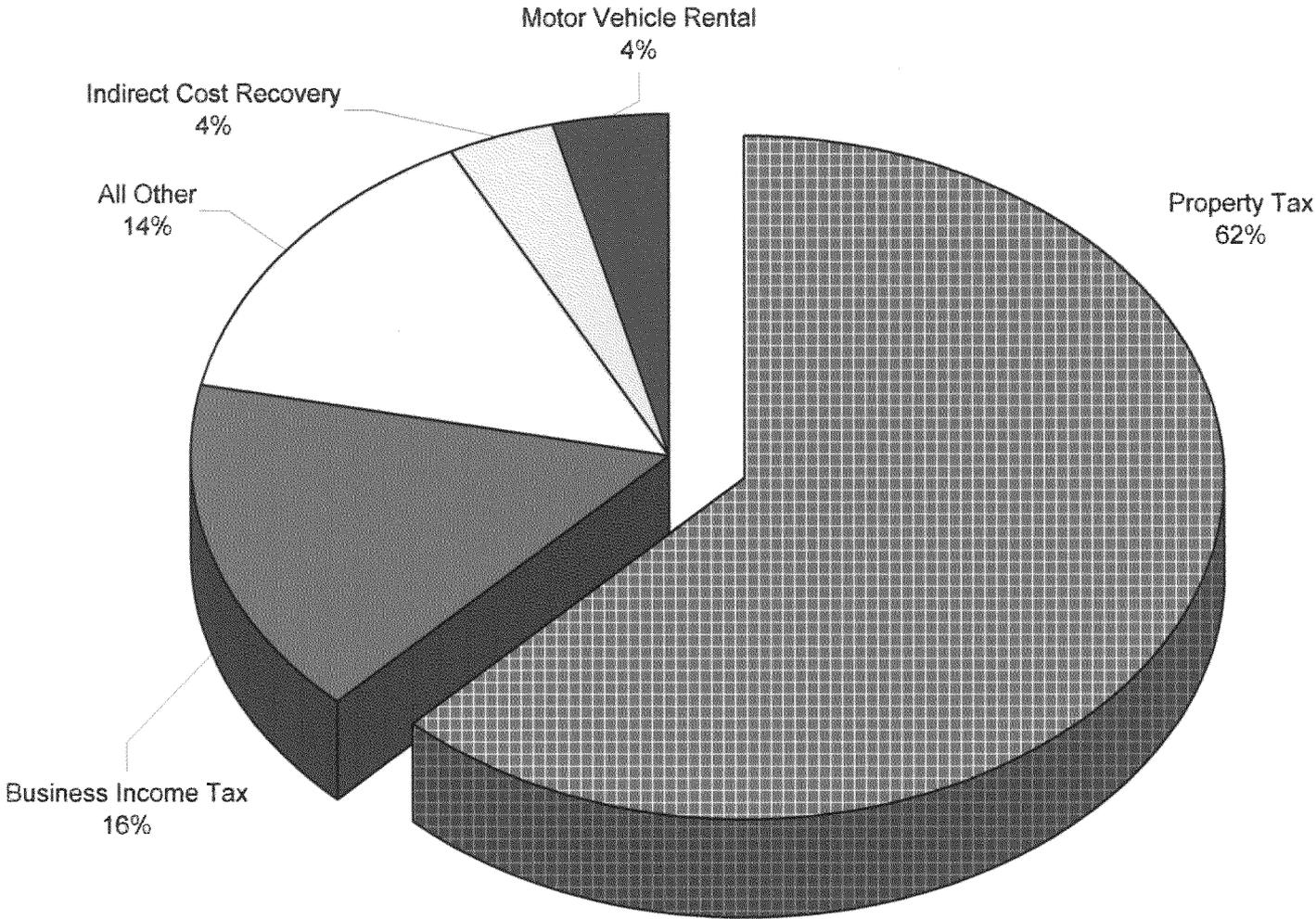
Based on Existing State Law, County Budget, Comparable Jurisdictions

Revenue Source	Currently Received	FY 2009 Adopted Budget	Potential Revenue Yield	Rate/%
Real Estate Transfer Tax ⁽¹⁾	No	\$ -	\$ 7,641,000	\$1.00/\$1,000
Cigarette Tax	Yes	850,000	400,000	.01 per pack
Liquor Tax (OLCC)	Yes	2,611,817	285,000	1% Increase
Beer & Wine Tax ⁽²⁾	Yes	600,000	600,000	Double
Recording Fees	Yes	4,785,000	1,000,000	\$1 per page
Payroll Tax ⁽³⁾	No	-	80,000,000	.5% of payroll
Video Lottery	Yes	6,355,000	1,250,000	1% increase
Motor Vehicle Rental Fee	Yes	13,212,000	1,321,000	1% Increase

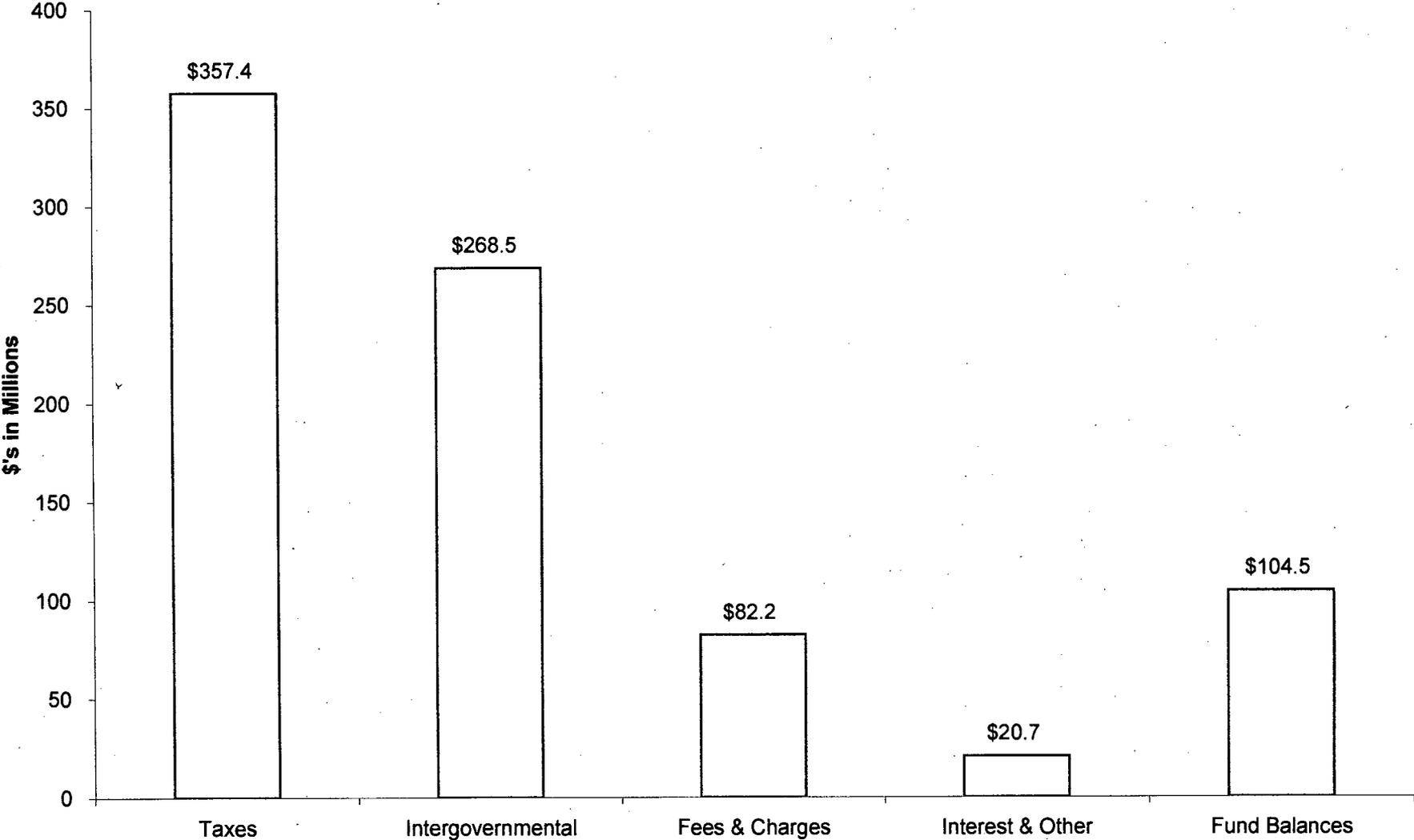
Notes:

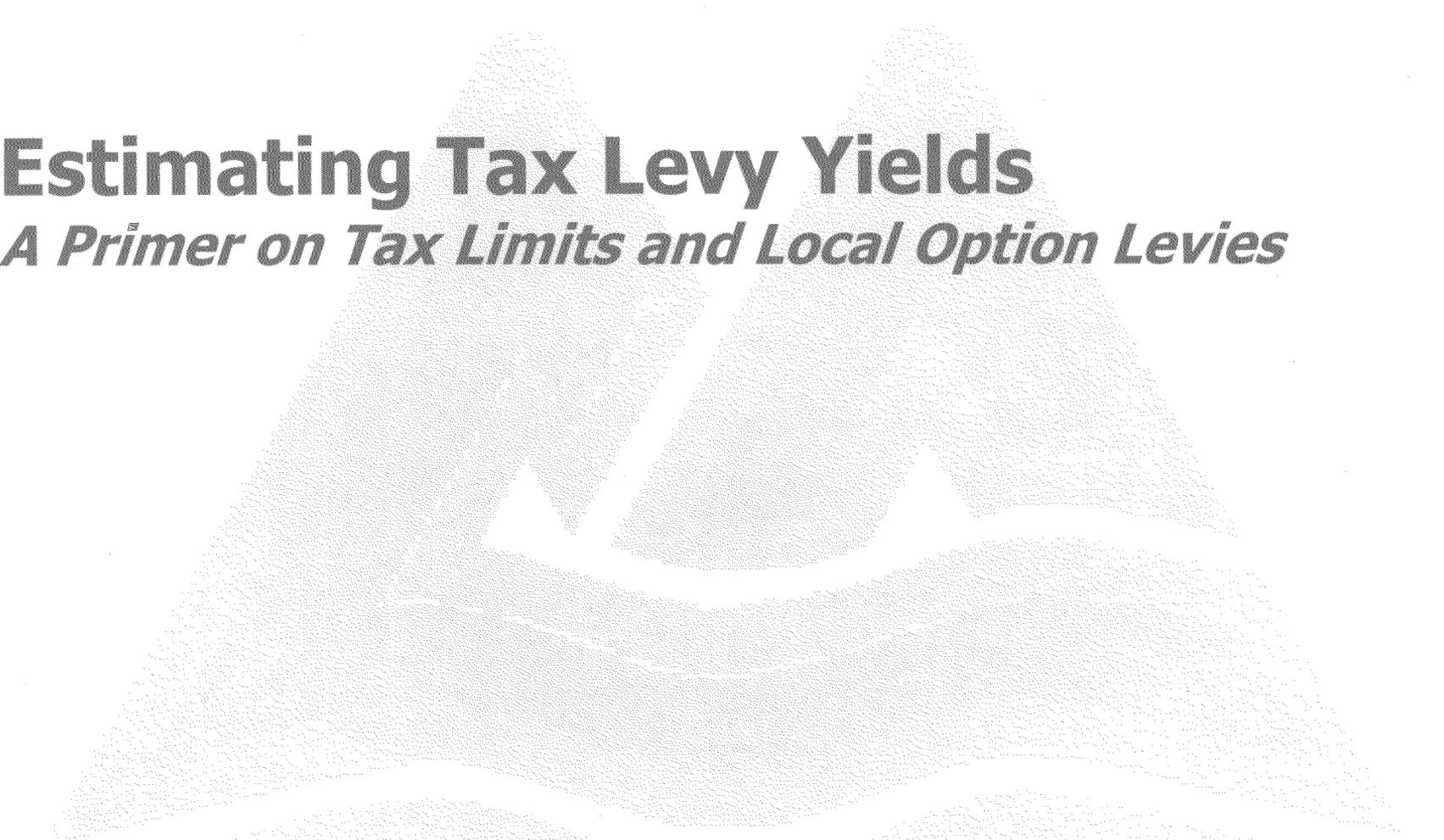
1. Real Estate Transfer Tax - Estimate based on average sales in Multnomah County over past 4 years. Assumes same rate as currently imposed by Washington County.
2. Beer Tax Currently @ \$2.60 per 31 gallons, Wine Tax currently @ 77 cents per gallon
3. Payroll Tax could replace existing BIT to produce greater stability in General Fund

**Property Tax as % of General Fund Revenue
Multnomah County - FY 2009**



**Multnomah County Operating Revenue
by Category - FY 2009**





Estimating Tax Levy Yields

A Primer on Tax Limits and Local Option Levies

Multnomah County Budget Office

January 7, 2008

Introduction

- **Measure 5 and Measure 50 Significantly Changed How Property Taxes Are Assessed and Collected**
 - We Will Define Terms and Concepts
 - We Will Identify Variables That Impact Levy Yields

- **The Art and Science of Estimating Tax Revenue**
 - Permanent Rates, Local Options, and Debt
 - Forecasting Value Growth - Change Property Ratio
 - Preliminary Forecast of Local Option Capacity



What Did Constitutional Measures Do?

- **Measure 5 (November, 1990)**
 - Limited Taxes to 1.5% of Property Value
 - Created Distinction Between Taxes for Education, General Government, and Debt

- **Introduced Concept of Compression**
 - General Gov't Taxes Could Not Exceed 1% of Value
 - General Gov't Levies Reduced When Rates Exceeded 1% (\$10 per \$1,000) of Assessed Value
 - All Levies Reduced Proportionate To Tax Authority
 - Rapid Growth in Values Caused Rates to Decline, Thereby, Effectively Eliminating Effects of Compression



What Did Constitutional Measures Do?

- **Measure 47 - “Cut and Cap” Initiative (November, 1996)**
 - Reduced Property Values Statewide by About 17%
 - Limited Future Value Growth on Existing Properties
 - Re-Based New Growth to 1995 Value Levels

- **Measure 50 (May, 1997)**
 - Measure 50 Overlaid on Measure 5 Limits
 - Created Permanent Rates and Local Option Levies
 - Distinction Between REAL MARKET and ASSESSED Value
 - Created a Hierarchy of Tax Levies
 - Changed How Compression Is Calculated



Concept - Hierarchy of Tax Levies

- **Permanent Rates - Created by Converting Tax Base to a Rate That Cannot Be Changed Under Any Circumstances**
 - Multnomah County Permanent Rate = \$4.34 per \$1,000 AV

- **“Pseudo” Debt Levies - Debt Obligations That Must Fit Within Measure 5 Rate Limits**
 - Portland FPD&R Levy and Urban Renewal Special Levy
 - Levies Not Rate Based and Can Fluctuate Year Over Year

- **Local Option Levies - Short Term Tax Levies (Usually 5 Years) Dedicated to Specific Services**
 - Multnomah County Library Levy = \$.89 per \$1,000 AV
 - City of Portland Children’s Fund Levy = \$.40 per \$1,000 AV
 - Local Option Levies Are First to Experience Compression



Concept - Compression Under Measure 50

- **Definition - Assessed Value (AV)**
 - Property Value Calculated After Passage of Measure 47
 - The Value That Taxes Are Calculated Against
 - Generally Cannot Grow More Than 3% Annually

- **Definition - Real Market Value (RMV)**
 - Value of Property If Sold in “Arm’s Length” Transaction
 - More Accurate Estimate of Actual Property Value
 - No Limits on Annual Growth
 - Value That is Applied to Calculate Measure 5 Limit

- **Definition - Compression**
 - Tax Loss Due to Application of Tax Rates and Measure 5 Limits
 - Compression Calculated on Property by Property Basis
 - Generally Occurs Where AV and RMV Are Similar



Example - Compression Calculation

- **Compression Calculated on a Property by Property Basis**
 - Measure 50 Tax Rates x Assessed Value Compared To;
 - Measure 5 Limit (\$15/\$1,000) x Real Market Value; And
 - Tax Amount is Lower of Two Calculations

- **Example - House A (RMV = \$445,000; AV = \$205,000)**
 - Measure 50 Tax = $\$21.81 \times 205,000 = \$4,471$
 - Measure 5 Tax = $\$15.00 \times \$445,000 = \$6,675$
 - No Compression

- **Example - House B (RMV = \$275,000; AV = \$205,000)**
 - Measure 50 Tax = $\$21.81 \times 205,000 = \$4,471$
 - Measure 5 Tax = $\$15.00 \times \$275,000 = \$4,125$
 - Compression Loss = \$346



Concept - Variables Impacting Levy Yields

- **Three Critical Variables in Estimating Tax Revenue**
 - Sum of All Limited Rates
 - Relationship Between RMV and AV
 - Change In Values Over Time

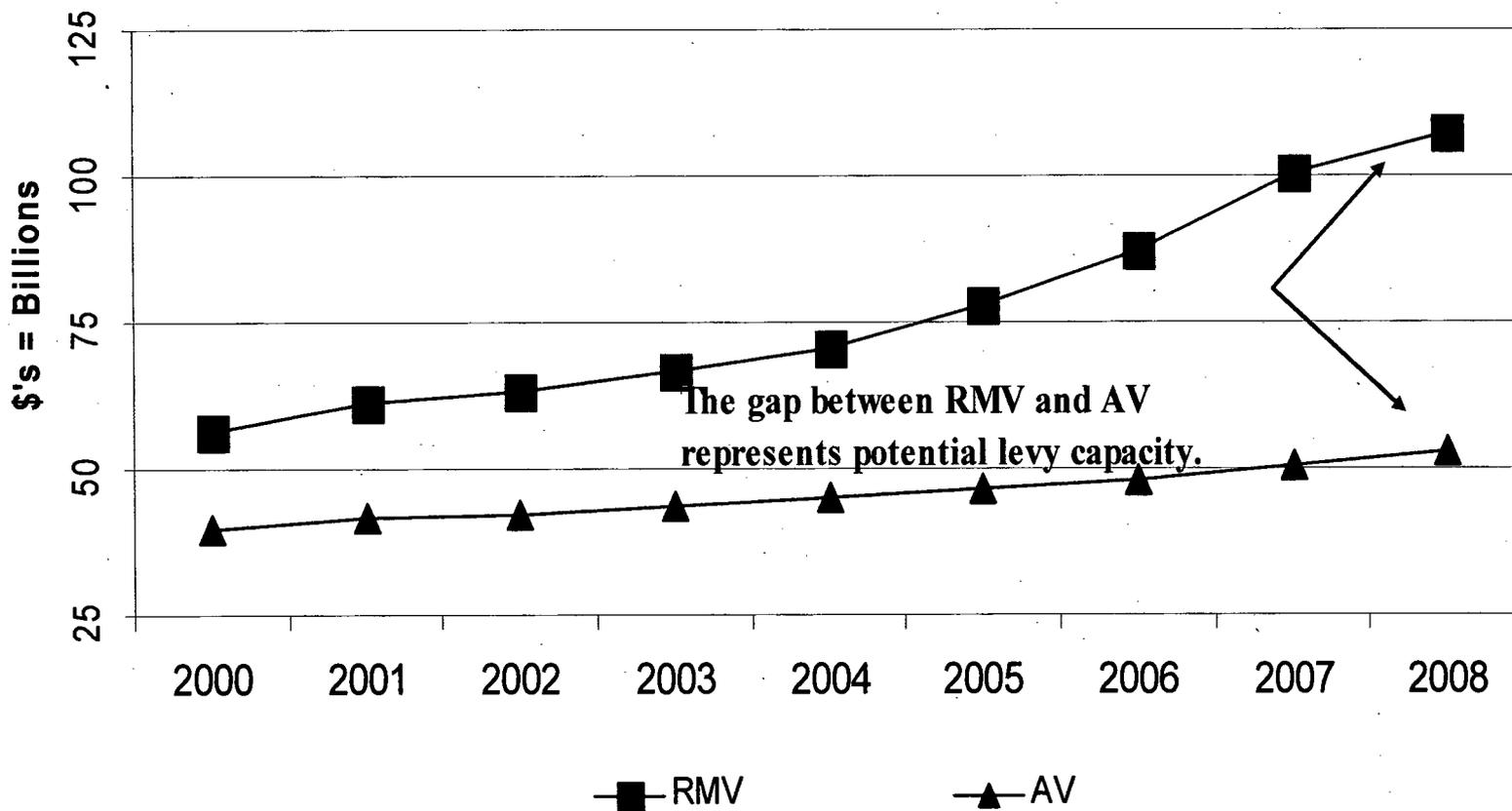
- **Limited Rates Can Exceed \$10 per \$1,000 AV w/out Significantly Impacting Levy Yields**
 - General Gov't Limited Rate in Portland = \$13.70 per \$1,000 AV

- **Since RMV Growth Is Not Limited The Spread Between RMV and AV Will Grow Over Time**
 - This Gap Creates Additional Tax Levy Capacity



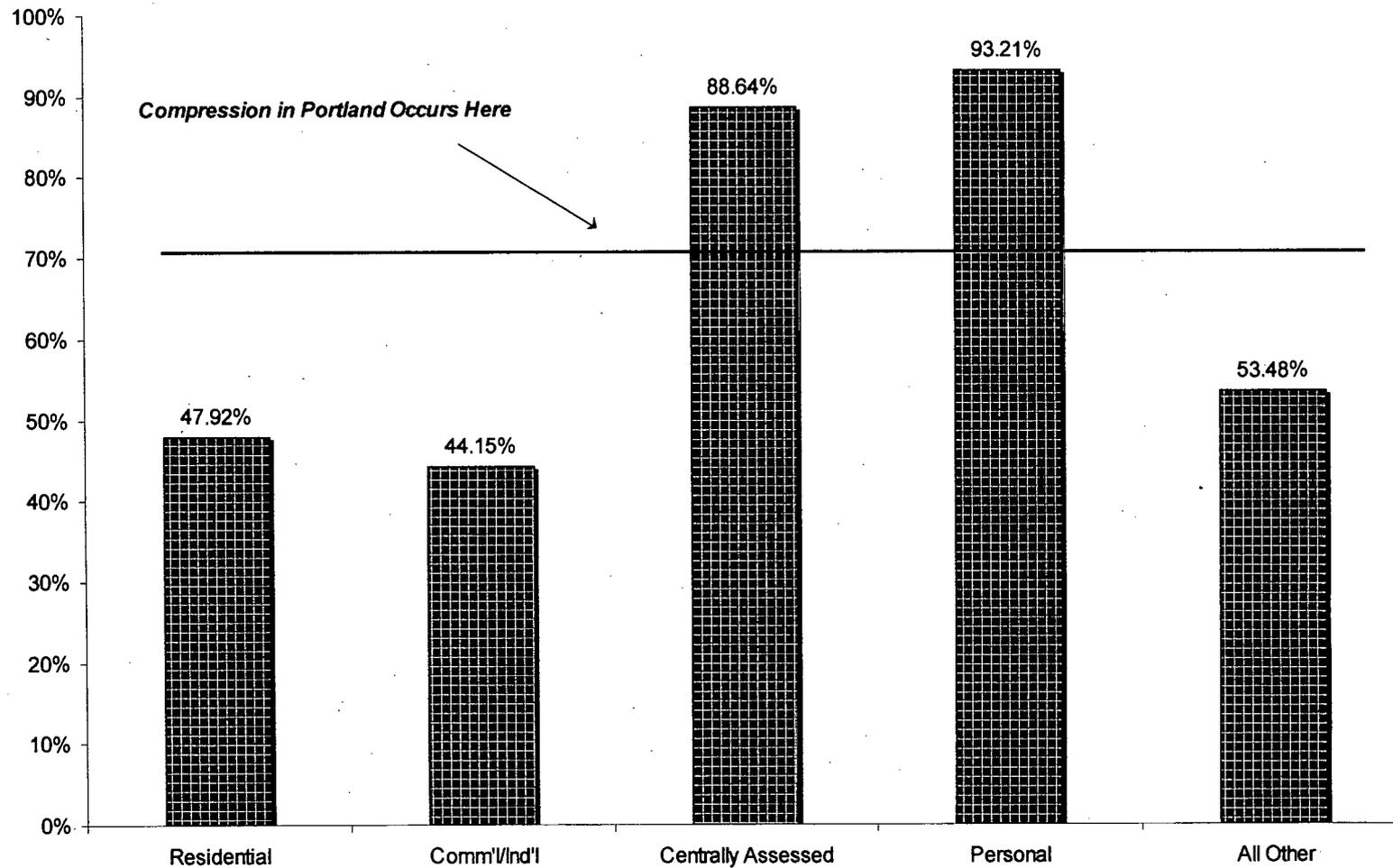
Change In Values Over Time

Multnomah County RMV v. AV Since FY 1999-2000



Value Ratios by Property Type

Ratio of Assessed Value (AV) to Real Market Value (RMV)
by Property Class, FY 2008 Values



What Does This Mean For Capacity?

- Estimated Revenue Available Based on Countywide Averages
 - Potential Revenue Yield Based on Countywide Averages
 - Estimated Capacity Translated to Rate = \$1.35 per \$1,000 AV
 - Does Not Account for Additional Compression That May Occur

Countywide Capacity by Property Class Based on FY 2008-09 Real Market Value

	<u>Total Potential Revenue</u>
Residential	\$ 50,333,183
Commercial/Industrial	16,488,666
Utility	-
Personal	-
All Other	4,837,049
Total	\$ 71,658,898



Estimated Local Option Revenue Yield Based on Current Values and Tax Rates

- **Current Library Local Option**
 - Rate per \$1,000 AV = \$.89
 - Extended Taxes = \$47.5 Million
 - Compression Loss = \$6.2 Million (13.2%)

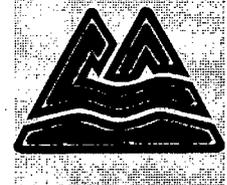
- **Each Cent Produces Net Yield of \$465,000**

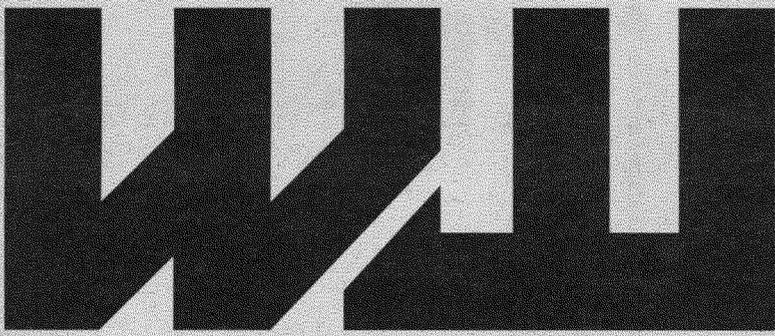
- **Net Local Option Revenue Estimates (Assumes No Add'l Compression)**
 - \$.50 per \$1,000 AV = \$23.3 Million
 - \$.75 per \$1,000 AV = \$34.9 Million
 - \$1.00 per \$1,000 AV = \$46.5 Million



Caveats and Disclaimers

- Generally Speaking, Increasing Rates Will Impact Compression
- Estimates Are Subject to Value Changes At The Individual Property Level
- Compression Is Concentrated on Local Option Levies But There Is A Ripple Effect on Other Tax Levies
- We Have Not Yet Experienced The Effects of Nationwide Slump In Real Estate Values
 - Compression On Library Levy Was As High As 29% In Previous Recession





WILLAMETTE WEEK PORTLAND'S NEWSWEEKLY

NEWS OUR ELECTION ENDORSEMENTS. P. 8
CULTURE HALO KILLS CASEY JARMAN. P. 27
HEADOUT FASHION WEEK PAPER DOLLS. P. 37

JAMES PITKIN'S

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE!

HOT RESTAURANT GUIDE ACTION INSIDE!



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October 20

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All ages

\$5 General Admission

(\$3 for students & club members)

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What's going on here? On October 3, our eleven ads, similar to the one pictured, were removed from six regional malls over our objection because they were "controversial" even though we had already paid for them and the mall's ad representative had approved their placement.

The apparent controversy seemed to revolve around the identity of the seated figures. Who are they? We offered to block out the identities as shown in the photo. This was also rejected at the direction of some mall managers.

Which leads us to ask: What is so controversial about this picture that some people would demand it be censored?

The Good News Tour, at the Oregon Convention Center on November 2 and 3, will answer this question and provide insight into what remains so radical about God. Next week we will also show you the uncensored picture and you can challenge your own stereotypes.

WWW.GOODNEWSTOUR.COM

CENSORED



JESUS - STILL TOO RADICAL?

The Good News Tour 2007

Fri., Nov. 2nd 12-5pm - 8-11 & Sat., Nov. 3rd 10am - 8pm All Day

Oregon Convention Center

727 NE Marlin Luther King Jr. Blvd - Portland, Oregon

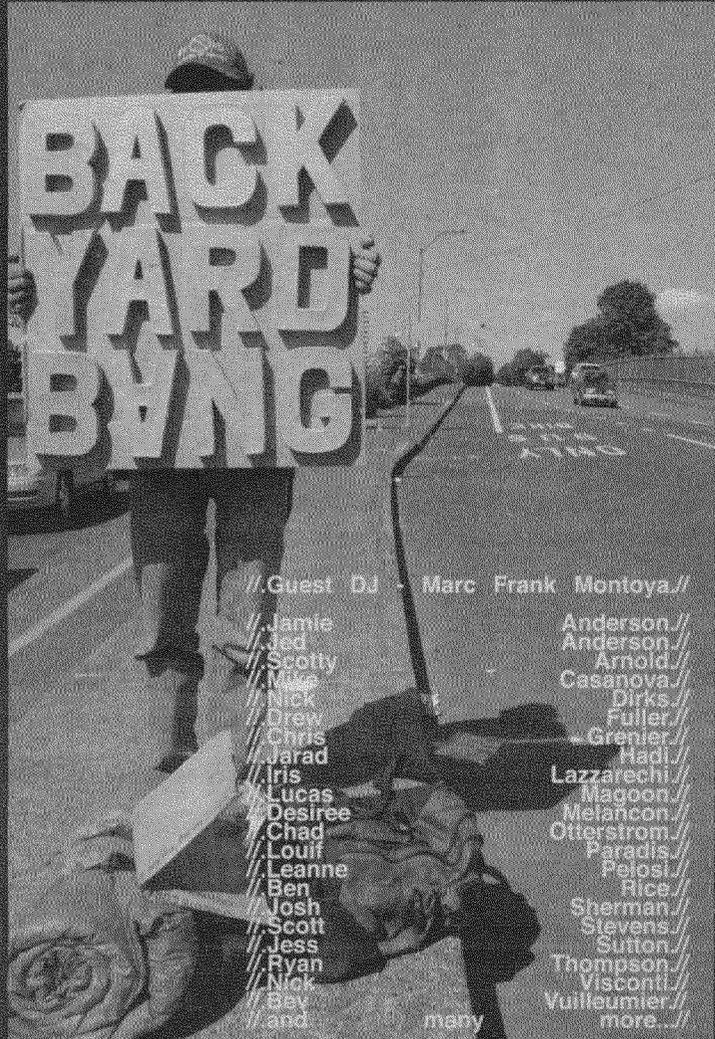
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//Guest DJ - Marc Frank Montoya//

Jamie	Anderson
Jed	Anderson
Scotty	Arnold
Mike	Casanova
Nick	Dirks
Drew	Fuller
Chris	Grenier
Jarad	Hadi
Iris	Lazzarechi
Lucas	Magoon
Desiree	Melancon
Chad	Otterstrom
Louif	Paradis
Leanne	Peiosi
Ben	Rice
Josh	Sherman
Scott	Stevens
Jess	Sutton
Ryan	Thompson
Nick	Visconti
Bev	Vuilleumier
and	more...

many



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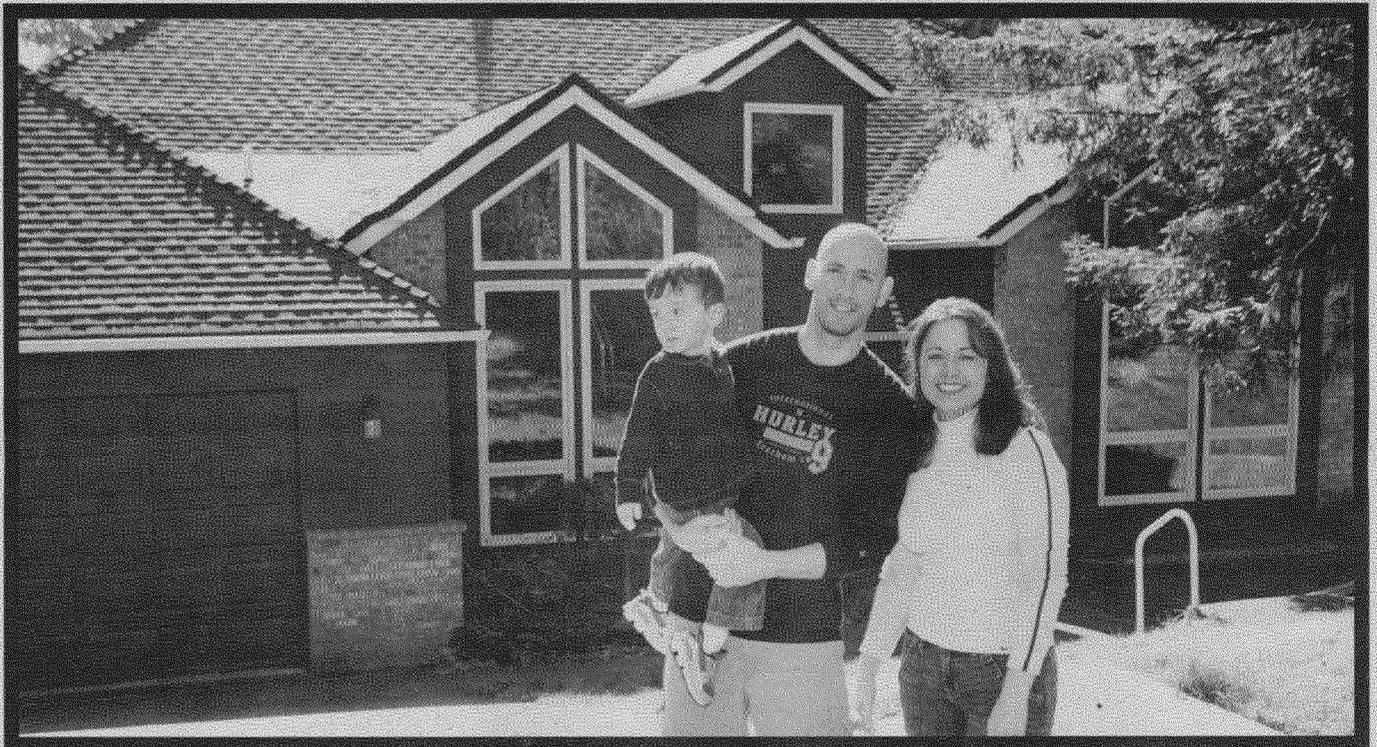
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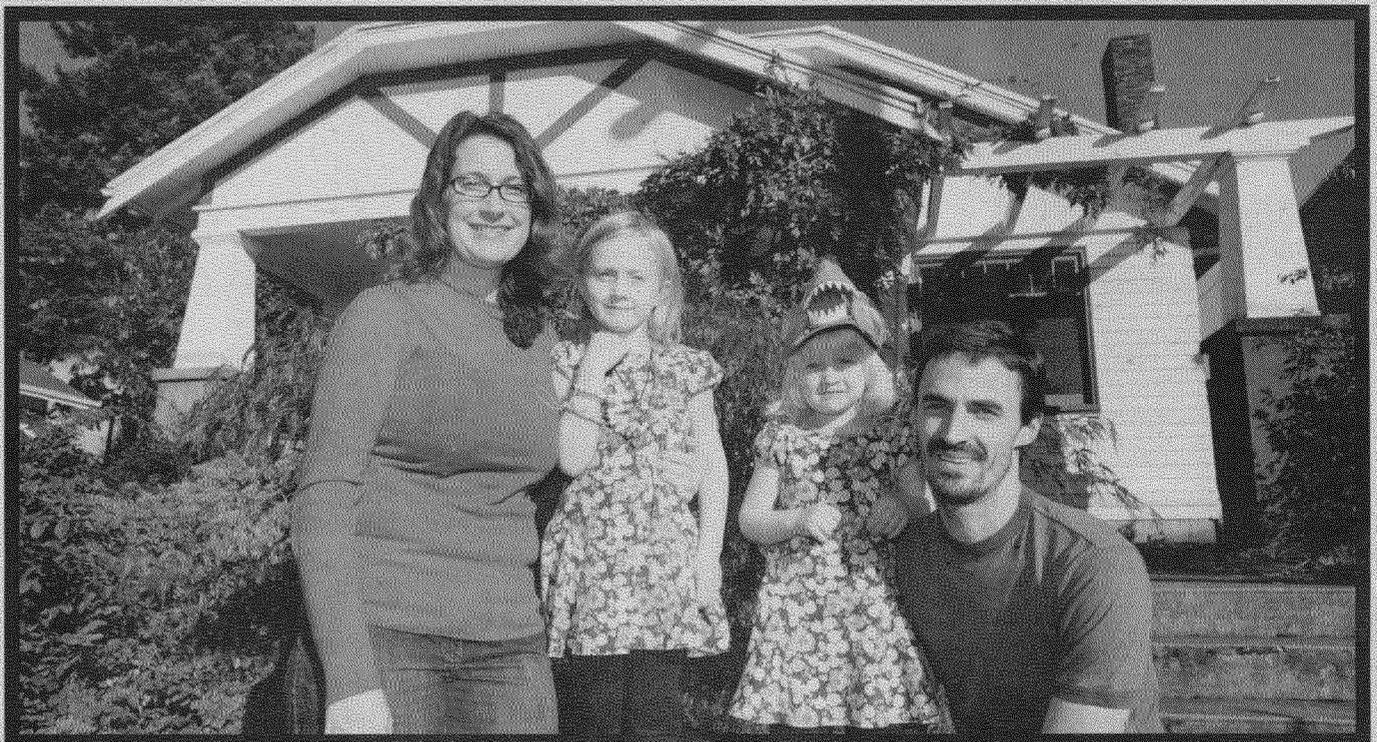
SPOT THE DIFFERENCES!



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UNEQUAL BURDEN: The Sallos family (top) moved to the Southwest Hills from Northeast Portland so 3-year-old Leo could attend better schools. The Meyers family (bottom) wanted to raise daughters Sophie and Julia along vibrant Northeast Alberta Street. Both paid about the same for their homes last year, but the Salloses' tax bill is 3 1/2 times the Meyerses'.

ANSWERS:

- HOUSE 1'S OWNER HAS A RAKE WITH MORE TEETH AND A TRICYCLE THAT WORKS.
- HOUSE 2 OWNER HAS BLOODSHOT EYES AND A DOG MESS TO CLEAN UP.
- OH YEAH, ONE MORE DIFFERENCE: **HOUSE 2'S OWNER HAS A PROPERTY-TAX BILL 3 1/2 TIMES THAT OF HOUSE 1'S OWNER.**

The Meyers and Sallos families live on opposite sides of Portland—and on the unequal ends of Oregon's property-tax divide.

Their two households have much in common. Both are headed by young professionals. Erica Meyers is a business manager at Wilson High School; husband Dan is an architect-in-training. Sol Sallos is a merchandise manager at Nike. Christine, his wife, is a part-time masseuse.

Both families bought a home last year for roughly the same price. The Meyers' Craftsman bungalow at the heart of the Northeast Alberta Street arts district cost \$369,000. The Sallos' two-story home in the Southwest Hills cost just a bit more, \$380,000.

That's where the similarities end. When their property-tax bills show up in the mail this week, they'll be treated with Oregon's version of discriminatory tax tyranny.

The Meyers household will be taxed \$1,734. The Sallos family's bill: \$6,356.

Two houses, purchased for roughly the same price last year. Yet one's property-tax bill is more than 3 1/2 times larger than the other.

"It's absolutely ridiculous," says Sol Sallos. "I don't have a problem with paying taxes. But if my home is worth \$400,000, and someone else's is worth \$400,000, we should be paying something close to the same in taxes."

Not in Oregon.

For Oregonians, this is a week when opening the mailbox can give bigger scares than Halloween. It's property-tax time.

For 950,000 homeowners, it's the biggest check most of us write all year. For many apartment dwellers, next year's rent hike will be determined in part by the size of their landlord's tax bill.

You might think a state as progressive as Oregon would see to it that property tax is levied in a fair fashion. After all, it's a serious chunk of change. Property taxes generate \$4.1 billion a year in our state, and it's the keystone of public finance, paying for a portion of virtually every service we expect from local government, from cops to parks to public health.

Yet we have a perverted property-tax system that hits some neighborhoods far harder than others. Depending where you live, you might be paying four times more than another home across town that's worth the same amount.

"It's outrageous, it really is. It's just blatant unequal taxation," says state Sen. Ginny Burdick (D-Portland), chair of the Senate Finance and Revenue Committee.

Even conservative Republicans can agree.

"There's no question in my mind that the system is broken," says state Rep. Tom Butler (R-Ontario), vice chairman of the House Revenue Committee. "That creates huge inequities."

GLOSSARY

ASSESSED VALUE: The value of your property as set for taxing purposes—usually less than the real market value. In Oregon, assessed value can grow no more than 3 percent a year under Measure 50.

REAL MARKET VALUE: The assumed value of a property if it changed hands from a willing seller to a willing buyer. Your property-tax bill will show this number—even though it has nothing to do with the amount of taxes you pay and in many cases is lower than what a property would actually fetch on the market today.

PROPERTY-TAX RATE: The percentage at which a property's assessed value is taxed.

MEASURE 5: Passed in 1990, it capped property-tax rates at 1.5 percent, or \$15 per \$1,000 of assessed value, though local bond measures don't count and may cause the rate to exceed 1.5 percent.

MEASURE 47: Passed in 1996, it took every property's assessed values back to the levels they were at in 1995, knocked off another 10 percent, and mandated that the growth of assessed values could increase no more than 3 percent a year, thus creating the pickle we are now in.

MEASURE 50: Measure 47 was badly written and not workable as a law. So without changing its basic provisions, the Legislature rewrote it as Measure 50, which voters approved in 1997.

"THERE'S NO QUESTION IN MY MIND THAT THE SYSTEM IS BROKEN." —STATE REP. TOM BUTLER (R-ONTARIO)

SPOT THE DIFFERENCES!

It's enough to make you want to dump your cappuccino in the Willamette in protest. Yet up to now, there's been no public outcry from Portlanders.

"People don't see the tax bills of their neighbors," says Chuck Sheketoff, head of the Oregon Center for Public Policy. "Not to say it won't happen, but in general, that's why it's not."

But as the gap between the lucky and the suckered continues to grow, more homeowners like the Salloses are waking up to a sobering fact—like rented mules, they've been saddled with more than their share of the tax burden. And for the most part, our politicians are doing nothing to stop it.

The exception? Political newcomer Ted Wheeler—the chairman of Multnomah County, who says he'll change the state's property-tax system or go down trying.

"I'm ready to put my reputation on the line to pursue this," Wheeler says.

Whoa, big fella.

First, get in the wayback machine and rewind to 1990. A savvy anti-tax activist and gym owner from east Multnomah County named Don McIntire got voters to agree with him to limit the amount of tax homeowners pay to \$15 for every \$1,000 their property is worth.

Not unlike capping a sales tax at a certain percentage, the initiative—called Measure 5—sought to restrain government but allow taxes to grow with the economy, measured by the value of property. It was a sensible proposal (to WW at least, which endorsed it), and it had the added benefit of equalizing school funding for rich and poor districts. It passed with 53 percent of the vote.

Six years later, enter Bill Sizemore, a conservative carpet salesman from Clacka-

mas County with a grin like a lighthouse and a handshake as big as a honey-baked ham. He wasn't satisfied with Measure 5, because a property's value could still skyrocket. He argued you had to strap down the value of the home for tax purposes—in other words, limit the growth in what's called the assessed value.

So he got enough signatures to put Measure 47 on the ballot. It didn't change the tax rate. It just rolled back the assessed value of all property to their 1995 levels, minus 10 percent. And it reached into the future, saying assessed values of property can grow no more than 3 percent a year. WW opposed 47, yet somehow it still passed.

One year later, the Legislature tinkered with Measure 47 just enough to make the law workable, and its new version, Measure 50, passed in 1997.

Now, 10 years later, Oregon enjoys a booming real-estate market—and a property-tax system that's about as fair as the Patriot Act is patriotic. That's because, like a Pleistocene insect suspended in amber, Oregon's base property values are forever frozen in 1995—the year Jerry Garcia died, the Oklahoma City federal building was bombed, and *Braveheart* won the Oscar for Best Picture.

You don't need to be a progressive to think our property tax system stinks. You can think government ought to have less dough, or the same amount. It's still appalling.

Why? Because real estate doesn't all increase in value at the same rate. Yet our system limits the increase, for tax purposes, to 3 percent a year no matter what.

Consider neighborhoods along Mississippi and Alberta, in Boise-Eliot and elsewhere. Due to rapid gen-

trification, they've seen property values shoot up like the price of a Hannah Montana ticket. Yet our tax system makes no room for changes in real-world values, and taxes in those neighborhoods are a steal because they still reflect 1995 prices.

Meanwhile, folks in Northwest, on Sauvie Island, in outer East Portland and in the West Hills pay the highest property taxes in the city compared with what their homes are really worth.

Depending where you live, your home could be assessed at 25 percent of its real market value, or 70 percent. And that disparity will continue to grow wider as the years pass and real prices drift ever further from their 1995 levels.

Outside experts call it a perfect example of how not to design a tax code, because it's fundamentally inequitable.

"It undermines taxpayers' faith in the tax system itself," says Nick Johnson, an analyst at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities in Washington, D.C. "One of the core principles of tax policy is what economists call 'horizontal equity,' which is that similarly situated taxpayers should pay similar taxes. Obviously, this violates that."

Take the Meyers and Sallos families, two households paying wildly different taxes for homes they bought the same year for about the same price.

Because assessed values are stuck in 1995, when Alberta was still a low-income neighborhood, the Meyerses' property

today is assessed at just \$79,510. The Sallos home in the Southwest Hills, where values were already high in the '90s, is now assessed at \$291,910. Rates rise just 3 percent a year, even though the real value of the Meyers home grew far faster and is now equal to the Salloses'.

Confronted with the glaring inequities Measure 47 has produced, Sizemore told WW he still believes it was the right way to reform property taxes. As Sizemore points out, it stopped the big yearly surges that sometimes occurred when taxes were tied to real values. And it lowered everyone's taxes from what they would be otherwise.

As for the new inequities between neighborhoods, "those are the trade-offs you have for bringing predictability to the system," Sizemore says. "I think predictability is of greater value. I wouldn't trade it, and I don't think Oregonians would, either."

Of Sallos and others in the West Hills who feel wronged for paying more, Sizemore notes: "You know what? They may not have voted for my measure, either."

Not only is Sizemore's fix unfair and unequal, it may also be illegal.

"Eventually...you may have a basis for a class-action lawsuit among homeowners who are unfairly penalized," says Tim Nesbitt, Gov. Ted Kulongoski's deputy chief of staff and former head of Oregon's AFL-CIO.

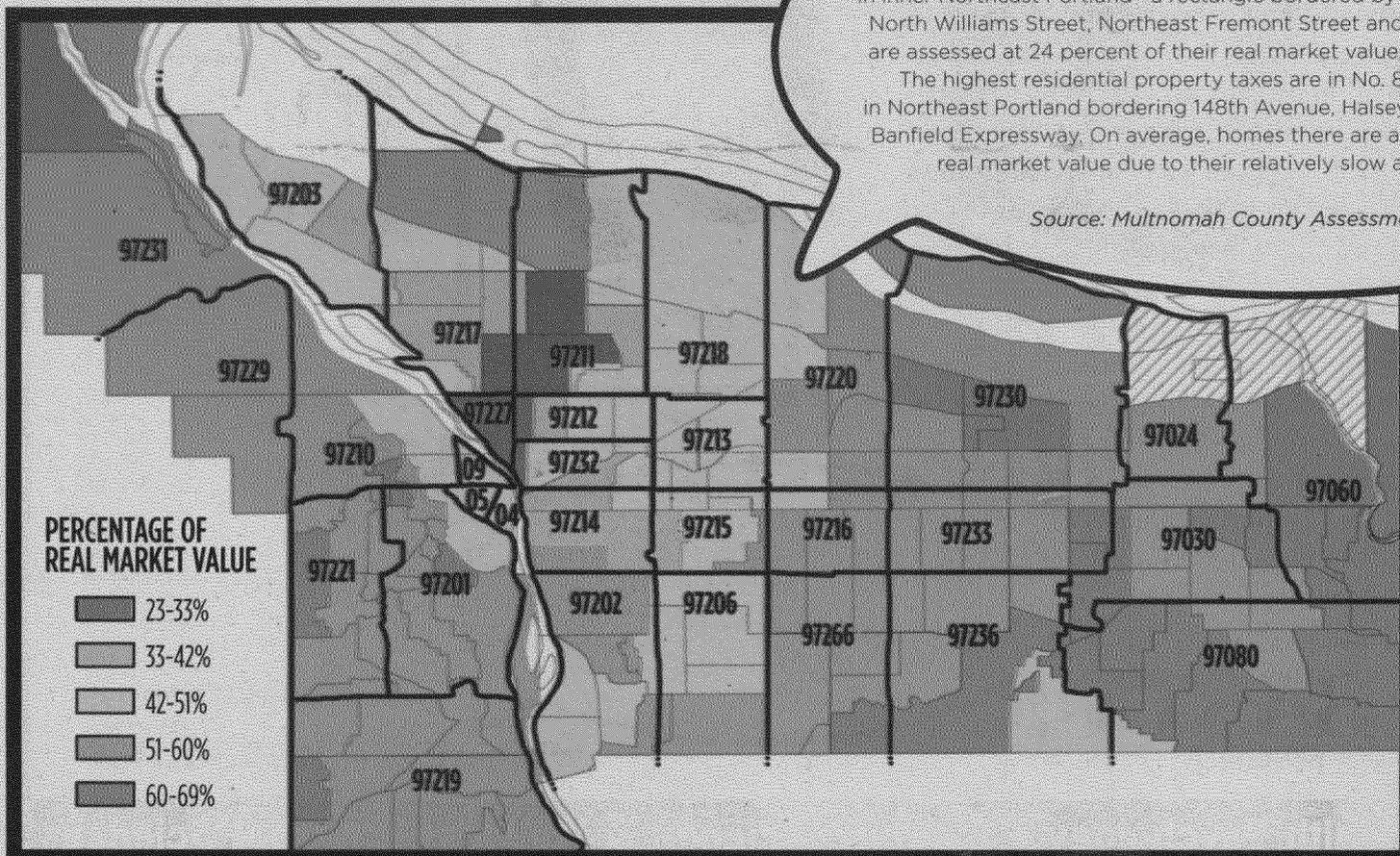
Burdick agrees. "What really surprises me is that no one has sued," she says. "It's something that's always grated on me."

CONT. on page 24

WHO'S GOT IT BEST—AND WORST?

Multnomah County divides its property-tax map into neighborhood districts. For low residential property taxes, records show the best neighborhood is No. 163 in inner Northeast Portland—a rectangle bordered by Northeast Killingsworth Street, North Williams Street, Northeast Fremont Street and I-5. On average, homes there are assessed at 24 percent of their real market value, the lowest rate in the county. The highest residential property taxes are in No. 83, an L-shaped neighborhood in Northeast Portland bordering 148th Avenue, Halsey Street, 160th Avenue and the Banfield Expressway. On average, homes there are assessed at 70 percent of their real market value due to their relatively slow appreciation since 1995.

Source: Multnomah County Assessment & Taxation



HOW MUCH DO YOU PAY?

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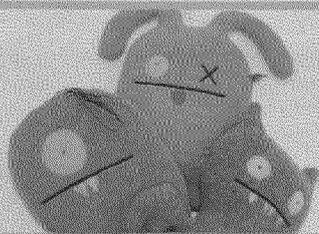
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SPOT THE DIFFERENCES!

Republicans and Dems can't agree on much in this state. Not on charter schools, land use, or tough-on-crime issues. But many do smoke the peace pipe when it comes to the unfairness of the property-tax system.

Yet for all the talk, nothing's been done. "It's the tar baby that nobody wants to punch," says Butler, the Republican state rep.

That is, until Wheeler came along.

As head of Multnomah County, Wheeler has some political self-interest involved. County governments depend on property taxes to an even greater extent than cities, which get more money from utility fees, business licenses and hotel taxes than counties do. (State government largely runs on income-tax dollars.)

If you could free property taxes from the constraints of our existing system, county government, whose cost of doing business increases 6 percent a year, wouldn't be locked into a system where property can only increase in value 3 percent a year.

But even if you wanted to keep our property tax system "revenue neutral" (a fancy way of saying it would not raise any more money overall), Wheeler says the current system is unfair to many homeowners. And he predicts those inequities will continue to grow.

Wheeler's proposed solution takes a page from California's playbook. In 1978, voters in the Golden State passed Proposition 13, capping rates even more strictly than Oregon's at \$10 per \$1,000 of assessed value, and slowing growth of

assessed value to 2 percent a year. (Oregon is at \$15 per \$1,000, remember, and 3 percent growth a year.)

But Proposition 13 had an important catch that our system lacks. It allowed local governments to reassess property back in line with its real market value, if and when the property changes hands.

That protects old ladies from losing their homes as property values rise—if you don't sell, your taxes are capped. But it also gives city and county budgets a boost by allowing them to assess real value on homes that sell in a hot market. Tax disparities arise from home to home if one of them didn't sell, but entire neighborhoods aren't strapped with higher taxes at random the way they are in Oregon.

At the time, Prop 13 became a *bête noire* among progressives, largely for its effect on funding for schools and social programs. But after a long list of failed efforts to undo it in the courts and the legislature, property taxes are now considered the third rail of Sacramento politics. There's little consensus among California's 37 million residents on whether Prop 13 is a good deal, but opponents have repeatedly failed to gather enough signatures to put competing tax measures on the ballot.

Now Wheeler wants to bring a Prop 13-style safety valve to Oregon, allowing property to be reassessed at market value if it sells. "I'm not asking for anything unreasonable, other than our tax be based on the reality of the market," he says.

EXCEPTIONS

Under Measure 47 and Measure 50, assessed values can grow only 3 percent a year. Properties are not reassessed when they're sold.

The only exception is for improvements or new construction.

Then the property is reassessed and the new value is added on, using a ratio that shrinks it down to Measure 50 levels rather than what the improvements are actually worth. New homes are assessed as if they'd been built in 1995.

Making it happen requires changing the state constitution, a process that would take years and require voter approval. Wheeler says he's starting slowly, meeting with leaders around the state and getting the rest of the Multnomah County commissioners on board.

Jeff Cogen, a new Multnomah County commissioner, likes the plan. "It's definitely worth exploring," he says. "The current system's definitely not working, as far as funding our basic services and with these basic inequities. This would help in both cases."

Even small-town Republicans are ready to sign on. "I think it's actually a pretty good idea," says Klamath County Commissioner Al Switzer.

Wheeler offers no timeline for when an initiative might go before voters. "It's an ambitious goal to assume that we could actually change the constitution," Wheeler says. "I am very willing to take a leadership role in this, but it's going to have to be more than just me."

Burdick, who took over as chair of the Senate Finance and Revenue Committee last month and will head a comprehensive tax reform committee, says she supports Wheeler's idea. "It should have been that way [from the beginning]," Burdick says. **WU**

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NEW WWT 10 or Less Film Festival

[TWO NIGHTS ONLY] A grab-bag of films lasting less than 10 minutes, the annual festival is filled with savory morsels. The movies range from the inscrutable (Jody Thompson's *Will of the Wisp*, a feminist meditation in which a woman encounters a stallion, a shattered mirror and a bloody bed) to the startling (T. Arthur Cottam's *Filthy Food*, which cheerfully observes another woman eating a very suggestive lunch). But the indisputable highlight is *I Met the Walrus*, which combines a teenager's hotel-room interview with John Lennon with ornate animations literalizing everything the Beatle says. There's even some pretty little policemen in a row. **AARON MESH. Hollywood Theatre. Friday-Saturday, Oct. 19-20.**

WWT 3:10 to Yuma

In filming this Western duel between Russell Crowe and Christian Bale, director James Mangold is remaking a 1957 Glenn Ford picture of the noble-gunslinger variety, while underlining the ethical choices with extra ink. As Mangold last proved in his Johnny Cash biopic, *Walk the Line*, he has a deft hand with a cliché, but he doesn't like to leave any untouched. So *3:10 to Yuma* may feature two men rushing to make a train, but they have a lot to talk over before they get there. **R. AARON MESH. 99 West Drive-in, City Center, Vancouver Plaza.**

NEW WWT 30 Days of Night

A gang of hungry vampires turns a small Alaskan town into an all-you-can-eat buffet just as the sun goes down for a month's rest. Basing *30 Days* on his graphic novel of the same name, screenwriter Steve Niles is so enamored with this twist on vampire mythology that he has one of the vamps mention they should've done this a long time ago. Regardless of such self-congratulatory meta-dialogue, the movie is a fresh take on an old legend. Much as Danny Boyle did for zombies in *28 Days Later*, Niles and director David Slade (*Hard Candy*) have re-envisioned vampires—as lightning-fast Eastern European nihilists. These ghouls are far less human than many recent portraits of the lonely ones and more interested in chewing than erotically siphoning blood from their victims. And they do plenty of chewing. Josh Hartnett and Melissa George star as Eben and Stella, an estranged couple whose love is rekindled by the onslaught of bloodsucking fiends. Ben Foster of *Six Feet Under* plays the overdramatic stranger who helps the vampires sabotage the town of Barrow, Alaska. And Danny Huston is totally creepy and barely recognizable as Marlow, the head vampire. Some of the shots seem to be pulled directly from the graphic novel, and much of the dialogue is better suited to the word bubbles it emanated from, but for the most part, *30 Days of Night* is a lot of fun, and more worthy of your nine bucks this Halloween than the latest installment of *Saw*. **R. RYAN HUME. Broadway, Cedar Hills, Cinema 99, Bridgeport, City Center, Cornelius, Division, Lloyd Center, Movies on TV, Oak Grove, Sandy, Tigard, Vancouver Plaza, Wilsonville.**

WWT Across the Universe

A dreamboat named Jude meets a sweetheart named Lucy, and they accompany her brother Max on a voyage through the Beatles songbook. This initially sounds like a spectacularly irritating idea (let's play *Moulin Rouge!* with the Fab Four!), but in practice it's often astonishing, and might have worked even better if director Julie Taymor had followed her literal notion to its logical end and simply made a Beatles opera. **PG-13. AARON MESH. Cedar Hills, Bridgeport, Lloyd Center, Pioneer Place.**

NEW WWT Angels in the Dust

The true story of Marion Cloete, a white South African woman who moved her family to a rural area and opened an orphanage for the children of victims of AIDS. The documentary doesn't dwell upon her sacrifice (the Cloetes left a wealthy, gated community) but instead balances the reality of living with AIDS with the small pleasures that these children eke out in spite of the horror that surrounds them. Cloete is fierce and unflinching—in one instance, she first yells at the caregivers of a man who is dying from AIDS because they do not want him to go to the hospital, and then explains to a meeting of women that the same man is a serial killer because he has infected many women carelessly. Cloete is objective to a point, but her personal involvement is deep, and seeing her struggle with that balance is fascinating. **JIM SANDBERG. Clinton Street Theater. Friday-Thursday, Oct. 19-25.**

The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford

The long-delayed, obnoxiously titled *Assassination* has the makings of a classic Western, starting with powerhouse performances. Playing the legendary outlaw in his last days, Brad Pitt is masterful. He's matched step for step by Casey Affleck as Ford, a fanboy whose admiration for the famed robber takes a dark turn. Affleck's performance is a revelation. Yet, although these ingredients are great, sophomore writer-director Andrew Dominik (Chopper) just can't make his story move. Boy howdy, is *Jesse James* a boring heap of uninspired dialogue and unnecessary subplots. It could have been a masterpiece. Instead, it'll suffer the same fate as Robert Ford himself: briefly discussed, then utterly forgotten. **R. AP KRYZA. Cedar Hills, City Center, Tigard.**

NEW Black White + Gray, *A Walk Into the Sea*

[THREE DAYS ONLY] If these short documentaries (screened in tandem by the NW Film Center) are any indication, artists are both lovers and destroyers of their closest confidants. Showing as a double bill, the films focus on pop artist Andy Warhol's and homoerotic photographer Robert Mapplethorpe's gay lovers, respectively. Director Esther Robinson uses *A Walk into the Sea* to uncover what happened to her uncle, Danny Williams, a brief member of Warhol's Factory who vanished mysteriously at age 27. While the movie is about solving Danny's disappearance, Robinson goes to great lengths to reveal how Andy Warhol abused and stole ideas from the artists around him. When an aging Factory member explains how "everybody else was, well, very closed off...very much for themselves," Robinson zooms in on a picture of Warhol, suggesting that his love affair with and rejection of Williams contributed to the young man's disappearance. *Black White + Gray*, by contrast, is blindly complimentary to its subject matter. Sam Wagstaff, a museum curator who was both mentor and lover to Mapplethorpe, is described by his friends (including an oddly mustachioed Patti Smith) as a visionary whose "exhibition[s] sent shock waves through popular culture." Rather than examine Wagstaff's personal flaws—like remaining closeted for years or engaging in a dangerous party lifestyle—director James Crump suggests Wagstaff's artistic accomplishments are all that matters. Both films analyze how an artist's personal life can affect his work, but only *A Walk Into the Sea* inspires us to care. **PAIGE RICHMOND. Whitself Auditorium. Friday-Sunday, Oct. 19-21.**

WWT The Bothersome Man

Dropped off by bus in an antiseptic purgatory where the wine contains no alcohol and the food no flavor ("hot chocolate, pussy, burgers: Nothing

tastes any good," a fellow citizen complains), a man tries to find some snatch of beauty or love. **AARON MESH. Living Room Theaters.**

WWT The Bourne Ultimatum

The presumed final chapter in Jason Bourne's adventures, *The Bourne Ultimatum* stands like a giant over the rest of the summer's "threequels." Picking up right where *Supremacy* left off, Matt Damon is hell-bent on tracking down the government agents who turned him into a monster, which means more globe-trotting, more fast walking, more chases and some truly gnarly fight sequences. **PG-13. AP KRYZA. Cedar Hills, Cinemagic, Movies on TV, Tigard, Vancouver Plaza, 99 West Drive-in.**

WWT Broken English

As imagined by director Zoe Cassavetes (yes, the daughter of John), Parker

Posey's Nora self-medicates the way real people do. She feels intoxicated because it's better than feeling something worse. It's not terribly difficult to imagine where *Broken English* goes from there, but it's not so easy to predict the dimensions of acting Posey shows. **R. AARON MESH. Living Room Theaters.**

NEW Bübiwulf

[ONE NIGHT ONLY] A women's studies professor by day, Hendrick Shooting Horse transforms in the moonlight into a werewolf who likes to fondle breasts. That's about as much plot as you're going to get from this juvenile, sophomore and often extremely funny low-budget movie from the producers of the local cable-access show *The von-Hummer Hour*. Filmed in Portland's Alberta Arts District, *Bübiwulf* pokes broad (ahem) fun at academic sensitivities. "Perhaps, in time, this campus will

come to see your penis as your greatest victimization," goes a standard line, "and the student body will rush forward to embrace your penis!" I can't exactly recommend any of this silliness, but I can't say I'd mind watching more of it. **AARON MESH. Hollywood Theatre. 7 pm Tuesday, Oct. 23.**

NEW Carbundle

[ONE NIGHT ONLY] A vile social worker preys on the mentally handicapped woman he's assigned to protect. Two small boys get in an alleyway tussle with much larger boys. A teenage girl encounters a strange man outside her mobile home. And the director of this movie appears onscreen to torment his cast with antisocial behavior and impossible demands. It's all part of the warped vision of director T. Arthur Cottam—

CONT. on page 66

REVIEW



CITY OF LOST CHILDREN

JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE BEREAVED DOESN'T MAKE US SAPS.

BY AARON MESH and amesh@wweek.com

What's with all the dead babies in Boston?

That may not be the most delicate way to pose the question, but on the other hand there's something distinctly crude about the simultaneous arrival of two new movies—*Gone Baby Gone* and *Reservation Road*—that focus on slain children and bereaved parents. Neither of the movies is exactly offensive in its approach (one of them is even intermittently good), but there's something distasteful about how closely they're modeled after earlier, successful New England-set films about slain offspring: *Mystic River* and *In the Bedroom*, respectively. What previously looked like a coincidence—it's fall, the leaves are turning, kids are dying—is starting to resemble a formula.

The only surprise offered by these recurrences is that the far superior one is directed by Ben Affleck. *Gone Baby Gone* suffers from any number of problems, not the least of which is that Ben has tried to establish his brother Casey as a viable tough guy. Investigating the kidnapping of a little Southside girl, Casey Affleck makes his way into several hostile barrooms, where the regulars take one glance at him and appear to consider whether they should bend him in half and use him as a toothpick. The actor's plausibility isn't helped by having to star alongside Morgan Freeman as a police chief of the highest rectitude. This is the sort of role Freeman is regularly described as being able to perform in his sleep; the trouble is that he might actually be taking this as advice.

But the movie works around Casey Affleck's shortcomings and in spite of Freeman's. It's based on a Dennis Lehane novel—yes, the same guy who wrote *Mystic River*—and it shares and even exceeds the earlier film's sense of place. Credit the Afflecks' Boston origins—but give at least as much acknowledgement to Amy Ryan (*The Wire*), who delivers a knockout performance as the world's least sympathetic mother. She abandons her kid for hours to snort coke, and when the child turns up missing she's less concerned for her child's safety than her own. She only looks worried at press conferences—while Ryan never discards the integrity of her portrayal to seek an audience's pity.

All the characters in *Reservation Road*, conversely, are as likable as can be. Joaquin Phoenix loses his son in a Connecticut hit-and-run accident and grows increasingly obsessed with finding the driver. Jennifer Connelly worries about her husband's brooding. Mark Ruffalo, who was driving the fatal vehicle, just wants to watch the end of the Boston Red Sox's World Series triumph with his own son before turning himself in. (This actually strikes me as the one plausible motivation in the movie; that championship was a pretty big deal.) Not a single character diverges from the inexorable path to tragic confrontation—precisely the same tragic confrontation we remember from *In the Bedroom*! What makes *Reservation Road* so dreadful is that its protagonists don't act like real people in dire circumstances; they act according to the example of characters from an earlier film. Little wonder the movie feels dead. **WWT**

SEE IT: *Gone Baby Gone* is rated R and opens Friday at Cedar Hills, Bridgeport, Cinetopia, City Center, Cornelius, Division, Fox Tower, Lloyd Center, Movies on TV, and Tigard. *Reservation Road* is rated R and opens Friday at Fox Tower.

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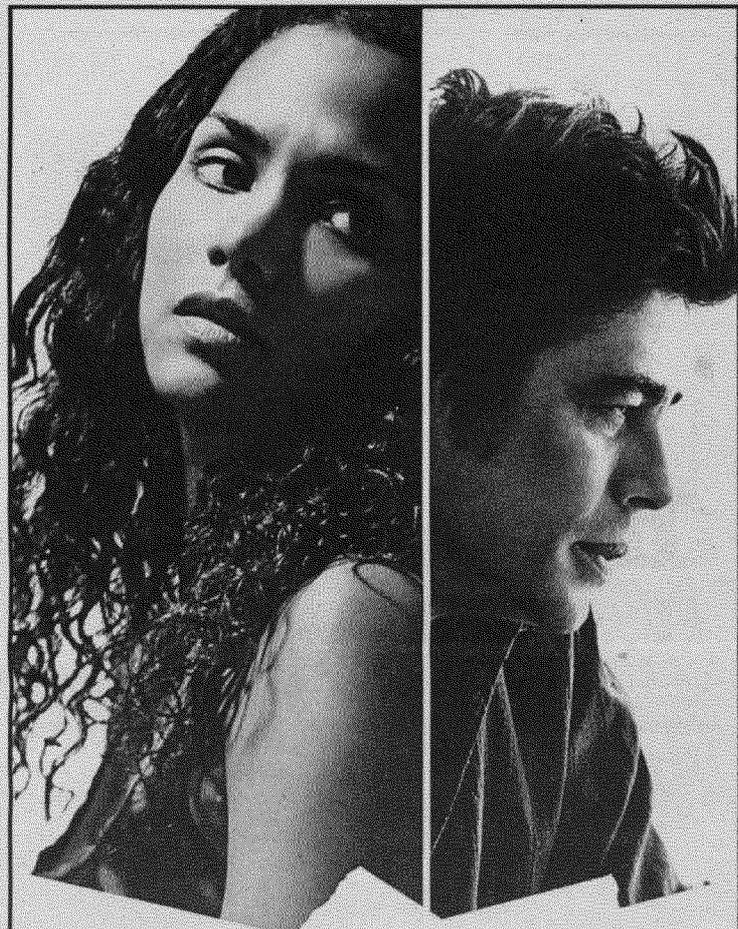
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THE SCORE

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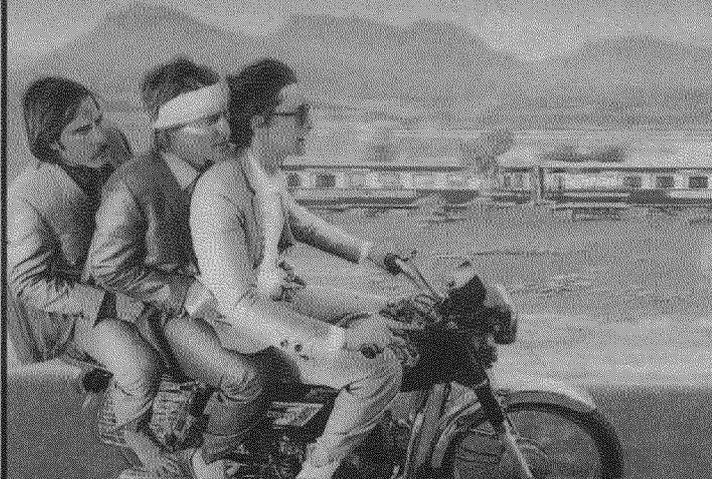
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THE SCORE PAGE 6

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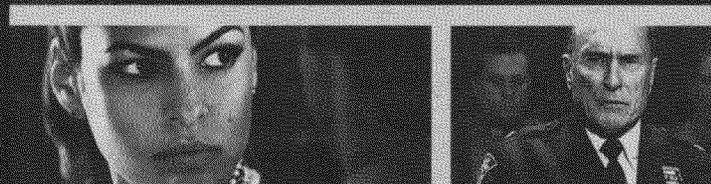
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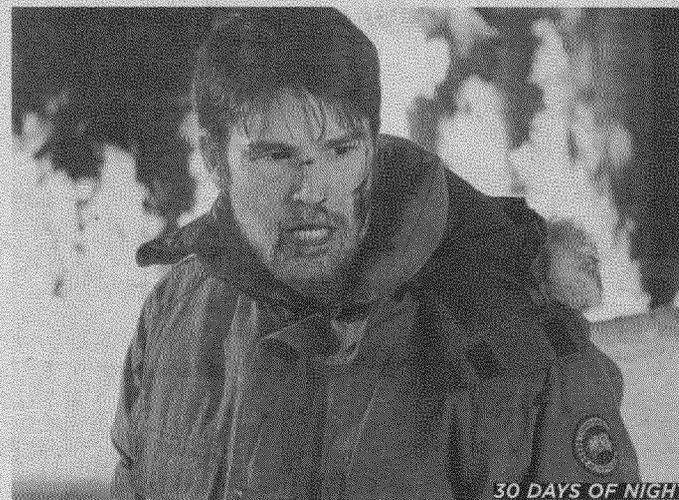
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30 DAYS OF NIGHT

The Game Plan

Do you smell what Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson is cookin'? It's pretty pungent. The former WWF star's newest vehicle, *The Game Plan*, is the *Jersey Girl* of sports movies—a Disney-produced piece of cinematic poo that stings the nose like a burnt, sugar-coated baby turd. **PG.** AP KRYZA. Cedar Hills, Cinema 99, Bridgeport, City Center, Cornelius, Division, Movies on TV, Oak Grove, Sandy, Tigard, Vancouver Plaza, Wilsonville.

NEW WJW Global Concern: Human Rights on Film

[TWO NIGHTS ONLY] Two more NW Film Center studies of justice: In *Hot House*, director Shimon Dotan takes his camera inside the Israeli prisons that hold hundreds of Palestinians—many of them serving multiple life sentences for crimes committed in connection with the Hamas or Fatah organizations. By letting the prisoners and guards tell their own stories, Dotan gives a face to the abstract idea of "enemy," be that Palestinian or Israeli. At one point a prisoner says that outside of the prison, the only way they usually see each other is through gun sights; the prison is one of the few opportunities these people have to interact with one another. It becomes clear over the course of the film that to the Palestinians, being behind the white walls and blue bars of the Israeli prison is no different from their lives outside of them. *Cocacero* follows Evo Morales, the leader of Bolivia's socialist party, on the campaign trail in the days leading up to the presidential election. Morales, an indigenous South American, came into his political career organizing the coca growers of Cochabamba in central Bolivia. *Cocacero* conflates the socialist uprising with the struggle of the coca workers against the United States' imperialist anti-drug forces with success; the film is inspiring and unique, if only to see into another country's political process. It is a stark contrast from our country's politicians—for whom taking an on-camera swim in a muddy river in their underwear would be career suicide—that Morales and his comrades are surprisingly candid. **JIM SANDBERG.** *Whitsell Auditorium.* *Hot House* screens at 7 pm Thursday, Oct. 18. *Cocacero* screens at 5 pm Sunday, Oct. 21.

Good Luck Chuck

If voluntarily witnessing Dane Cook go down on a stuffed penguin with utter carnal desire is the last visual you'd find funny, then *Good Luck Chuck* is probably not for you. The story line is just entertaining enough to get away with crass, sexually charged fratulence. **R.** ELI ANNA BAR-EL. *Vancouver Plaza.*

The Heartbreak Kid

The Farrelly Brothers remake of Elaine May's honeymoon-gone-awry farce is misanthropic, mean-spirited and culturally insensitive. And God help me, I liked it. Ben Stiller's aggrieved sthick wore thin a decade ago—which makes it all the funnier that the Farrellys offer him not a shred of sympathy. **R.** AARON MESH.

Broadway, Cedar Hills, Cinema 99, Bridgeport, Cornelius, Division, Movies on TV, Oak Grove, Sandy, Vancouver Plaza, Wilsonville.

In Between Days

Director So Yong Kim follows a Korean girl named Aimee (Jiseon Kim) as she plods through the slushy streets of Toronto's immigrant neighborhoods with a boy she likes but can't express her feelings to. Oh, Aimee! What's she gonna do? Not much, it turns out: She and her almost-boyfriend (Taegu Andy Kang) steal radios from cars, hang out in soda shops and nearly experiment with sex. I recognize these characters are dazed by alienation, but the problem feels deeper: These two kids are Natural Born Mopees. **AARON MESH.** *Living Room Theaters.*

WJW In the Shadow of the Moon

If you believe they put a man on the moon, here's a documentary that feat actually was. David Sington's film combines rich outer-space footage from the NASA archives—much of it never seen outside government warehouses—with moving testimonies from the rocket men. **PG.** AARON MESH. *Hollywood Theatre.*

WJW Into the Wild

There are all kinds of movies that could be made from Jon Krakauer's book *Into the Wild*, which recounts the short life of Christopher McCandless—a young man who left everyone he knew to live off the Alaskan wilderness, and wound up dying of starvation in an abandoned bus. The one made by Sean Penn is infuriating, self-important, bewitching and poignant—which is appropriate, since McCandless (Emile Hirsch) was all of those things as well. But the movie possesses one quality that its hero apparently lacked: It understands the feelings of people not named Christopher McCandless. **R.** AARON MESH. *Fox Tower, Cedar Hills, Bridgeport, Cinetopia, City Center.*

The Jane Austen Book Club

There's a reason why women love Jane Austen. Her books present a frank, worldly voice all buttoned up in Regency-period garb. But take away the fancy clothes and insert a couple hundred years and you get a bunch of stressed-out women in bad outfits bellyaching about life. **PG-13.** KELLY CLARKE. *Bridgeport.*

WJW The Kingdom

Peter Berg has made an action movie that is set in Saudi Arabia, that includes a great many terrorist bastards getting wasted, and is ultimately a responsible and even a very fine piece of filmmaking. The movie's final 30 minutes are so richly vengeful they border on crass wish fulfillment, but what's come before casts doubt on the wish. **R.** AARON MESH. *Broadway, Cedar Hills, Bridgeport, Division, Forest, Movies on TV, Roseway, Wilsonville.*

WJW The Lives of Others

Gerd Wiesler (the late Ulrich Mühe) is ordered to spy on a theatrical couple,

and the once-robotic Stasi operative is tested beyond imagining. **R.** BECKY OHLSEN. *Living Room Theaters.*

Lust, Caution

To answer the most pressing question about Ang Lee's *Lust, Caution*: Yes, there is certainly enough graphic sex in it to earn an NC-17 rating, but it's not the sort of sex that happy people will enjoy watching. The characters played by Tang Wei and Tony Leung have violent sex. Then they have acrobatic sex. This is followed by mournful sex. All of it is very solemn sex. But Lee's movie has started going wrong well before Leung sticks his crouching tiger into Wei's hidden dragon. The 158-minute World War II espionage story has a promising opening hour, then fades into a tearjerker both sonorous and dull. **NC-17.** AARON MESH. *Fox Tower.*

WJW Michael Clayton

George Clooney plays the titular guy behind the guy behind the guy, a law-firm "fixer" who finds himself embroiled in a sinister case not so easily fixed. It tends to throw a wrench into your legal strategy when the chief counsel (Tom Wilkinson) has stopped taking his medication, declared himself "Shiva, the god of death," and is holed up in his loft with damning evidence and a month's supply of baguettes. The directorial debut of longtime writer Tony Gilroy (the pen behind all three *Bourne* movies) is literate, sleek and elegant—and certainly never dull, though the material feels a touch reshaped. **R.** AARON MESH. *Cedar Hills, Cinema 99, Bridgeport, Cinetopia, City Center, Cornelius, Division, Fox Tower, Lake Twin, Lloyd Center, Movies on TV, Oak Grove, Sandy, Tigard, Wilsonville.*

Mr. Woodcock

Expectations should always be kept low for a movie with a dick joke in its title, but this one is nearly agreeable. That's entirely thanks to Billy Bob Thornton as the titular gym teacher, a sadistic old cool who torments Seann William Scott. **PG-13.** AARON MESH. *Cinema 99, Movies on TV.*

NEW The Nightmare Before Christmas in 3-D

Though it's hard to complain about seeing Tim Burton's collaboration with Henry Selick trotted out again, it's at least a little ironic that a movie about a guy tired of Halloween traditions is now a Halloween tradition. **PG.** *Bridgeport, Cinetopia, Lloyd Center.*

NEW One Way Boogie Woogie/27 Years Later

[ONE NIGHT ONLY, DIRECTOR APPEARANCE] The Northwest Film Center and 40 Frames bring director James Benning to Portland to show two portraits of urban Milwaukee. *Whitsell Auditorium.* 7 pm Tuesday, Oct. 23.

WJW Once

A winsome romance about a street musician trying to finish a demo tape. *Once* has the same ratio of irritation and appeal as a first album by any lachrymose singer-songwriter. You can condemn it for being histrionic and self-pitying, but you'll have to do so with a lump in your throat. **R.** AARON MESH. *Hollywood Theatre, Moreland.*

NEW WJW Oswald's Ghost

Those six seconds in Dallas get another 90 minutes on film—this time in a sleek, Kennedy-assassination-for-beginners package. The even-handed documentary is a perfectly acceptable crash course in the conspiracy theories and debunking that has swirled around Lee Harvey Oswald; it offers nothing new to the well-informed, but then it suggests fairly convincingly that few Americans are informed about Nov. 22, 1963, at all. The film's opening segment is the most compelling: The use of archival network-television footage conveys how the

CONT. on page 70

JOAQUIN PHOENIX MARK RUFFALO JENNIFER CONNELLY MIRA SORVINO

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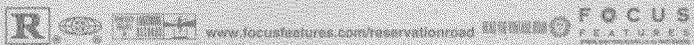
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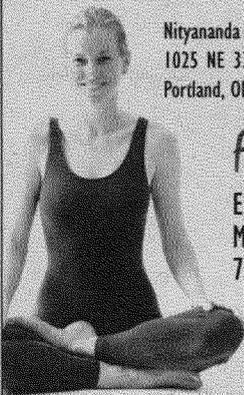
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QUEER WINDOW

page 32

WU

WILAMETTE WEEK

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Scott Mantz, ACCESS HOLLYWOOD



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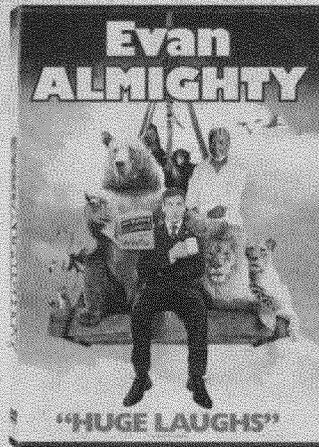
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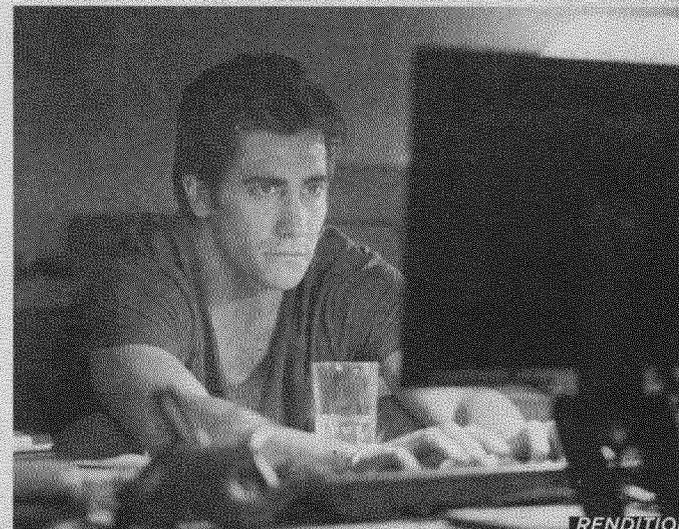
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RENDITION

live assassination of a presidential assassin was "not only appalling, but uncanny." That mood dissolves somewhat after the Warren Report, as director Robert Stone (no relation, but speaking of uncanny...) lets the many theorists have their say. It speaks volumes about the wild speculation still surrounding JFK that the voice of reason in *Oswald's Ghost* is Norman Mailer. AARON MESH. *Hollywood Theatre, Saturday-Monday, Oct. 20-22.*

Paprika

The latest anime contribution from Satoshi Kon (*Tokyo Godfathers*) concerns a dream-sharing headset called the DC Mini, which looks like an iPod gone very, very sinister, and is mostly a pretext for a movie about dreams within movies within dreams. AARON MESH. *Living Room Theaters.*

Portland Lesbian and Gay Film Festival

The best 10 days of queer cinema in the Northwest finishes off with a closing-night screening of *Shelter*. It's *Brokeback Mountain* starring surfer dudes, but with none of Larry McMurtry's spare, explosive dialogue or Ang Lee's breath-taking cinematography. What's left is a simple and attractively shot love story starring two hotties: the achingly beautiful Trevor Wright as struggling artist and gay-conflicted Zach, and goateed butch Brad Rowe as his patient, father-figure lover (and, strangely, former childhood friend) Shaun. Zach confronts his own sexuality (bi-curious or 100 percent homo?), family drama (helping to raise a sister's kid, the adorable Cody) and artistic dreams (CalArts or bust) in idyllic San Pedro, with Shaun's mild-mannered guidance and the help of a few beer-induced make-out sessions. A slickly produced romance sure to inspire fag-surfer frenzy. STEPHEN MARC BEAUDOIN. *Shelter screens at Cinema 21 at 8 pm Saturday, Oct. 20. See Movie Times for more festival events.*

Rendition

Gavin Hood's tortuous torture picture opens with CIA analyst Jake Gyllenhaal's partner getting killed in a suicide bombing intended to assassinate someone else. The film has a different fate: It's in the wrong place at the right time. With new revelations of secret Bush-Gonzales torture memos emerging every week, the moment has never been more ripe for a movie about the United States' use of "extraordinary rendition"—shipping terror suspects to overseas prisons. But this is not that movie. Hood (*Tsotsi*) has directed a mess that manages to be simultaneously pedantic and confused as it follows a wrongly arrested engineer (Omar Metwally) and the conscience-stricken boy (Gyllenhaal) who watches his waterboarding. Hood takes great pains not to offend with his message, whether he's giving dragon lady Meryl Streep a speech about how government policy saves lives, or

setting the wet work in the nation of "North Africa." But he still manages to offend anybody who cares about plausible drama. Reese Witherspoon is reduced to pitching hysterical fits in congressional offices; Streep proves her mastery of accents by affecting several in the same movie, and Gyllenhaal manages to deliver a climactic, noble Shakespearean quotation after drinking himself to sleep for weeks. With the exception of an ill-used Peter Sarsgaard, the whole thing is about as credible as a Dana Perino press conference. R. AARON MESH. *Cedar Hills, Cinema 99, Bridgeport, Cinetopia, City Center, Cornelius, Division, Lloyd Center, Movies on TV, Oak Grove, Pioneer Place, Sandy, Tigard.*

Resident Evil: Extinction

Milla Jovovich continues to survive the apocalypse without the aid of critics. R. 99 *West Drive-in, Cedar Hills, Cornelius, Division, Movies on TV, Oak Grove, Pioneer Place, Sandy, Tigard.*

The Seeker: The Dark Is Rising

Given *The Seeker's* immediate barrage of product placement—a montage of Motorola and Samsung—it's no surprise the filmmakers have little regard for the integrity of their material. The movie is based on Susan Cooper's 1974 fantasy classic, but you'd hardly know it. Characters have been deleted and transparent plot twists inserted, and all the magic and mysticism of Cooper's novel has evaporated. PG. ETHAN SMITH. *Cedar Hills, Cinema 99, Bridgeport, Forest, Movies on TV, Wilsonville.*

Shoot Shoot Shoot

[ONE NIGHT ONLY] Cinema Project presents the stateside premiere of '60s counterculture shorts from the London Film-Makers' Co-operative. Groovy! *New American Art Union, 7:30 pm Wednesday, Oct. 17.*

Superbad

Seth Rogen has co-written an entire movie about two high-school seniors trying to buy alcohol in the firm hope that underage drinking will lead directly to underage sex. It ranks among the funniest movies ever made. R. AARON MESH. *Cinemagic, St. Johns Twin Cinema-Pub.*

The Ten Commandments

The fall's truly inexplicable entry: A cartoon Moses story, which we're pretty sure was done nine years ago and called *The Prince of Egypt*. On the plus side: Ben Kingsley contributes vocal work. On the minus side: The computer animation appears to have cost \$12. PG. *Sandy.*

Things We Lost in the Fire

Early in *Things We Lost in the Fire*, David Duchovny walks in on his wife and daughter watching TV and crying. "Lifetime again?" he asks. The same question might be asked of *Things We Lost*, an Oscar bid gone awry. The film centers on Audrey (Halle Berry), a mother of two mourning the death of her husband (Duchovny, dead from

first frame but alive in flashbacks). For atonement, she reaches out to her late husband's childhood friend Jerry (Benicio Del Toro), a former lawyer, now a heroin junkie. She cleans him up, lets him bond with her kids, lashes out at him—pretty much everything you'd expect from a Lifetime film, but with big stars. Berry, alternating between screaming and crying, further discredits her *Monster's Ball* Oscar win (which, it's arguable, was a "thank you for the nudity" present). Del Toro does what he can with the material, brooding and twitching through the motions. Danish Director Susanne Bier simply fills the screen with extreme close-ups and withdrawal montages. *Things We Lost in the Fire* (which features no fire at all) is a misstep for all involved, a tear-jerker that humps every cliché imaginable. In that sense, maybe it's an Oscar contender after all. R. AP KRYZA. *Cedar Hills, Bridgeport, City Center, Division, Lloyd Center, Movies on TV, Pioneer Place.*

This Is England

The affable skinhead Woody (Joe Gilgun) takes young Shaun (Thomas Turgoose) under his wing, and then Combo (Stephen Graham) emerges from prison and offers himself as a less-benign father figure. AARON MESH. *Living Room Theaters.*

Tyler Perry's Why Did I Get Married?

We don't know, Tyler. For the tax benefits? Not screened for critics. PG-13. *Cedar Hills, Division.*

We Own the Night

Two questions dominate James Gray's cops-and-Russian-mobsters flick. First, will Joaquin Phoenix choose his unforgiving daddy (Robert Duvall) or his unbelievably boring girlfriend (Eva Mendes)? Second, will anyone care? Professional standards prohibit me from addressing the first question, but rest assured that the second answer is no. R. AARON MESH. *Cedar Hills, Cinema 99, Bridgeport, Cinetopia, City Center, Cornelius, Division, Lloyd Center, Movies on TV, Oak Grove, Pioneer Place, Tigard, Vancouver Plaza.*

Weirdsville

It took me several years to tire of the heroin drama. Thanks to director Allan Moyle (*Empire Records*), it took me 90 minutes to tire of the heroin comedy. Maybe it would have helped if Moyle hadn't shot *Weirdsville* like an Evanescence music video, all translucent glow and sped-up camerawork. Or maybe if the jokes had been funny—Willem Wennekers' screenplay labors under the assumption that nothing inspires belly laughs like an old-fashioned fatal O.D. When two Ontario junkies (Scott Speedman and Wes Bentley) go to bury their dead lady friend under a drive-in movie theater, they encounter a trio of Satanists, and peculiarity ensues. Here and there, a bit of absurdity actually works: a mobster who enjoys curling, or a little person (Jordan Prentice) with a penchant for medieval reenactments. But more often the hijinks are sordid and grim: *Harold and Kumar Go to Hell*, basically. Meanwhile it's something of a surprise to see Bentley here, looking like he's spent the past decade watching that *American Beauty* plastic bag and forgetting to shave. R. AARON MESH. *Hollywood Theatre.*

Vanaja

From India comes a movie that proves that no matter where we may live, no matter what cultural barriers may divide us, we can all be bored by giggling children. I wasn't compelled by the juxtaposition of vibrant Bollywood colors and a stilted social-injustice plot. AARON MESH. *Hollywood Theatre.*

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Picture this: The Cleaners @ Ace Hotel, October 20th, 7 pm. The evening led by host(ess) Marie Fleischmann with an art show and auction featuring paintings, drawings, and multimedia art; Add fabulous silent-auction items; Complement with drinks, tantalizing treats and sugary snacks and sprinkle in with a liberal amount of fun stuff: music by DJ Anjali and The Incredible Kid, The Sprockettes, and a craft table. What does this make? One fine evening, and a chance to support the very-worthly cause of independent, feminist publishing. And we'd like you to be there.

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GROUPS

BOOK CLUB: INVENTIVE, (POST)MODERN FICTION Authors we have read include Margaret Atwood, Italo Calvino, Haruki Murakami, Jeanette Winterson, and Salman Rushdie. Wed., October 24th— The Road, by Cormac McCarthy. Wed., November 28th— Ficciones, by Jorge Luis Borges. All you need to do is read the book and show up. Meetings start 7PM, at Friendly House Community Center, 1737 NW 26th Ave. (at Thurman St.) (503)228-4391 www.friendlyhouseinc.org

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SINGLES INTERESTED IN PERSONAL GROWTH Two professionally-led workshops, Saturdays 10/27 and 11/10, 9am-1pm, NW Portland. Enneagram Personality Types & Hand Types as maps for enlightened and successful dating. Details: EnneagramPortland.com, (503)295-4481.

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Free Energetic Balancing Workshop & demonstration by Stephen Lewis on Saturday October 20th, 3-6 pm. In this cutting edge workshop, Stephen will measure energy frequencies of an audience member to identify energetic imbalances in consciousness. You will be astounded to learn how this revolutionary spiritual technology is helping thousands worldwide heal themselves. Multnomah Ballroom, Doubletree Hotel, Lloyd Center, 1000 NE Multnomah. More info: emc2arun@att.net, 541-767-3679, or energeticmatrix.com

pet events

DOUBLE YOUR FUN FOR HALF THE PRICE! \$50 off on pair adoptions for cats & kittens. Hurry this offer won't last for ever. www.catadoptionteam.org 503-925-8903

Saturday, October 20 RAISE THE ROOF!

2007 dinner & auction to benefit the SW WA Humane Society \$75, register at www.southwesthumane.org. 5:30 PM Hilton - Vancouver

Saturday, October 20 PET ADOPTION EVENT

12 PM - 4 PM Pet Smart - Beaverton; www.indigorescue.org

Saturday, October 20 WET NOSE SOIREE

Dove Lewis' annual masquerade ball 5:30 PM The Governor Hotel www.dovewis.org

Saturday, October 27 FCCO BOWLING BALL

A Halloween Celebration of ALLEY CATS STRIKE BACK! Proceeds benefit the adorable fluffballs at the Feral Cat Coalition. Register at www.feralcats.com. 3 PM - 6 PM Hollywood Bowl

Saturday, October 27 PET ADOPTION EVENT

12 PM - 4 PM PETCO - Beaverton www.obsa.org

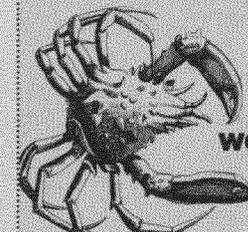
Wednesday, October 31 MONSTERS, MUTTS & MEOWS

A Halloween party and adoption event for the Willamette Humane Society. \$7 5 PM - 7 PM. Willamette Humane Society www.willamettehumane.org

LOVE FLUFFBALLS?

Volunteer at the Feral Cat Coalition on Fridays & Sundays. www.feralcats.com

To get your event published, send details to sdoering@wwweek.com



wellness
pages
77-78

by Matt Jones

"Together at Last" 25 meet 26

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		
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67								68				69		

Across

- Vessels that may be tied together
- "Star Trek: TNG" alum Wheaton
- End of a Greek series
- Frequently used font
- Geological time period
- President who's a black belt in judo
- Monte _____
- "Chocolate Rain" singer
- Puts up _____
- Actress Taylor of "The Notorious Bettie Page"
- X-ray units
- Like some fear
- Guy lost somewhere in the alphabet?
- "OK, fine"
- Prize "The Price Is Right" contestants freak out about
- Big-haired stud
- Purpose of some drives
- Blimp, e.g.
- Comes up with nothing?
- Suffix for Gator or Power
- Actor Ken _____
- Syllable before "la la"
- Country with a yellow sun on its flag
- Abbr. near the O _____
- Permeate _____
- Parking spot _____
- 2002 Cy Young winner
- Fire, euphemistically
- Buddy, in Barcelona
- Chaotic situation
- L.A.'s area, for short
- Puzzle magazine that features fake ads

- 1990s "Unbelievable" band
- Jackson (Ice Cube's real name)

Down

- Triathletes, e.g.
- Noah's mountain
- Really excited by _____
- Powdery materials
- Mail hole _____
- Moisten _____
- 740(K) alternative
- Clapton classic
- Suffix for board game spinoffs
- Frankie who played Malcolm
- Abbr. at an airport terminal
- Angelina Jolie made-for-TV movie
- "_____ luck?"
- Russian limousine (and backwards, a girl's nickname)
- Plant that gives us latex
- Astrological sign ruled by Mars
- Answering machine button
- Brand-name back relief option
- "Raiders of the Lost Ark" extra
- Unix search command
- End of many Dutch town names
- "Entourage" agent
- Woman's name that means "pure" in Greek
- Judging the competition, with "up"
- Small songbird
- Afternoon prayer, in Islam
- Mt. Rushmore's st.
- Neaten _____

- Mechanical combatant, for short
- Toots and the Maytals' genre
- Nipple ring?
- Ravine
- Fluctuates
- Nighttime noise
- Grab _____
- They might get ground up for pie crust
- As well _____
- Do some market work?
- Doc bloc
- Cup edge
- Jerry's chaser
- Hit-in-the-solar-plexus noise

last week's answers

J	A	M	T	A	R	T		P	O	S	E	S					
O	V	E	R	G	R	O	W	D	E	M	O	D	E				
B	E	G	O	R	R	A	H	O	R	A	N	G	E				
S	C	A	P	E				D	A	R	W	I	N	I	A	N	
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R	A	C	Y		A	B	S	T	A	I	N	S					
D	U	O			P	L	A	I	T	S	A	F	E				
A	L	O	H	A	F	R	O	M	H	A	W	A	I				
D	R	A	M	A	Q	U	E	E	N	N	E						
D	I	S	B	U	R	S	E										
S	R	I			L	E	D										
P	I	N	K	R	O	S	E	S		B	I	P	E	D			
A	P	A	N	I	C					A	L	T	I	T	U	D	E
R	E	T	O	O	K					L	I	S	T	E	N	I	N
E	N	E	W	S						P	A	S	S	K	E	Y	

©2007 Jonesin' Crosswords (editor@jonesincrosswords.com). For answers to this puzzle, call: 1-900-226-2800, 99 cents per minute. Must be 18+. Or to bill to your credit card, call: 1-800-655-6548. Reference puzzle #0332.

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