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Summary of 2015 Estimates Findings, Based on Preliminary Estimates

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Oregon's Preliminary 2015 Population Estimates Indicate 4 Million Milestone is Surpassed as over 51,000 are Added during the Past Year

Portland State University's Population Research Center (PRC) released the preliminary 2015 population estimates for Oregon and its cities and counties on November 16.

According to the preliminary July 1 population estimates, Oregon's population increased from 3,962,710 in 2014 to 4,013,845 in 2015*, or by 51,135. This increase represents a 1.3 percent change, slightly higher than in the previous year (1.1 percent). The increase in 2015 is around 7,500 higher than added in 2014, but still not quite reaching peak pre-recession growth of 58,000 in 2006.

Population growth consists of two factors: natural increase (the number of births minus the number of deaths) and net migration (movers-in minus movers-out). From 2014 to 2015 net migration accounted for roughly 80 percent of Oregon's population growth. During the past several years, natural increase has been contributing a shrinking share of population increase. Because of a declining fertility rate, the number of annual births has increased only slightly in recent years; and the number of annual deaths has risen at a faster pace due to the wave of aging baby boomers.

The counties that experienced the largest gains in population from 2014 to 2015 have the largest populations. As in the previous many years, Multnomah and Washington counties added the highest number of persons—each adding around 11,700 and 10,000 residents, respectively. Clackamas, Deschutes, Marion, and Lane counties each added over 3,000 to their populations; Jackson County added over 2,000; and Yamhill, Linn and Benton each added at least 1,000 to their counts. The population increases in these ten counties contributed to 88 percent of the statewide population growth this year. Almost half of Oregon's thirty-six counties experienced increases ranging over 100 to under 835 persons. Nine counties saw little population change in the past year (less than a 100 person change).

Generally, net in-migration has either boosted population growth around the state or has prevented population losses. In counties where a natural decrease is occurring (over a third of the counties experience a natural decrease, meaning there are more deaths than births), net in-migration has offset overall population decreases. Net in-migration this past year is estimated to have accelerated in most counties statewide from last year.

In terms of growth rates, or percent change, nine counties saw increases at least at the same as the State or higher. Deschutes County experienced the largest percentage gain (2.6 percent) followed by Hood River, Washington, and Multnomah counties (2.2 percent, 1.8 percent, and 1.5 percent, respectively). Thirty-four of Oregon's 242 cities experienced population growth in the past year at rates higher than the State. For smaller cities, sharp spikes in the growth rate could mean the increase of just a few persons, however.

Oregon's incorporated cities have gained over 32,000 people from 2014 to 2015, with a combined 2015 total population of 2,776,860. Incorporated cities collectively capture about 70 percent of the state's population, about the same as in the last few years. Preliminary estimates also show that cities accounted almost two-thirds of Oregon's population increase, roughly the same as in 2014.

The preliminary estimates at least show small population increases in about half of Oregon's 242 incorporated cities from July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015, with 35 cities adding more than 100 persons. Portland shows the greatest increase with almost 12,000 additional persons than in 2014.

The cities of Eugene, Hillsboro, Salem, Grants Pass, and Bend each added over 1,000 persons in the past year. The population increase of over 1,400 in Grants Pass was largely attributed to large annexation of over 1,300 persons during the year. Twenty-eight other cities and towns are estimated to have a population change of between 100 and 900 during the period, led by Wilsonville. Sharp population increases in some of the smaller cities are usually due to the construction of apartments, or the arrival of workers and contractors for industrial projects such as energy or power, or for agricultural related jobs.

Eleven cities, scattered throughout Oregon are estimated to have between 5 and 110 fewer persons in 2015 than in 2014. Most losses are attributed to a decrease in the group quarters population (persons living in group living situations such as jails, college dormitories, and nursing homes), the removal of mobile homes, or the demolition of housing units. Fifty-eight cities reported to PRC that they had no change in population during the one year period. Note that the decrease in Tualatin's population is due to a correction rather than an actual population loss.

PRC produces annual population estimates for Oregon, and its counties and incorporated cities using the most recent available data. These estimates are based on changes in the number of housing units, persons residing in group quarter facilities, births and deaths, students enrolled in public school, persons employed, Medicare enrollees, State and Federal tax exemptions, Oregon

driver license holders, and other administrative data. Statewide housing and group quarters' population data are collected from annual questionnaires sent directly to Oregon's cities and counties. If we do not receive updated annual data from a city, its population estimate remains the same as in the previous year. The annual population estimates are used for revenue distribution to local governments and in program administration.

The preliminary population estimates are subject to revision during a month review period. The final July 1, 2015 population estimates will be certified by December 15, 2015. The annual population estimates are revised quarterly to account for annexations throughout the year.

*PRC has prepared a Web site called, Oregon's Road to 4 Million (roadto4million.research.prx.edu). The site contains information that traces Oregon's demographic journey to reach a population of 4 million.