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State's Web site ranks among the nation's best, survey finds
U.S. States E-Governance Survey says Oregon's site is No. 2 in the country

Salem—The Web site of Oregon's state government ranks among America's very best, according to a recently released survey conducted jointly by three major institutions, the state's chief information officer announced today.

The survey evaluated the Web sites of all 50 state governments and graded them on such factors as security and privacy, usability, content, and citizens' response and participation. Only Maine's Web site outscored Oregon's in the overall ratings, but only slightly.

"Oregon's state agencies have worked hard to give our citizens easy access to their state government, and our Web site is a major part of that effort," said Dugan Petty, the state's chief information officer. "It's good to see real evidence that the effort is paying off. Our high ranking testifies not only to the advancement of our Web technology, but also to the high quality of the information and services that our state agencies provide to our citizens."

The survey was sponsored by the American Society of Public Administration and conducted jointly by the E-Governance Institute at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey (Newark), and the Department of Public Administration at San Francisco State University.

Maine, Oregon, Utah, South Carolina and Indiana represent the states with the highest scores, based on the 2008 evaluation of the 50 states. California scored 11th and Washington State scored 35th. Oregon received the highest overall rating of all 13 Western states. Among the top-rated 20 sites nationwide, Oregon's Web site scored especially well in content, usability and privacy.

Petty said that 83 state agencies operate Web sites within guidelines and rules that require a common "look and feel," a factor that citizen-users find helpful. When seeking information or services from the vast majority of state agencies' Web pages, users need not waste time acquainting themselves with varying layouts and designs. Petty also stressed that the agencies' communications officers and managers pay close attention to design, layout and language that make navigation and retrieval as easy as possible.

The state never “rests on its laurels,” Petty said. “The Web is a rapidly changing world, and citizens always demand new and better ways of getting the information and services they need. This is why we have begun a systematic, forward-looking process to ensure that state government’s Web pages change with the times, and that they meet the expectations of our citizens.”

Petty praised the State E-Governance Board, the state E-Government Advisory Council, and all the other agencies, boards and commissions who shape the state’s Web site, develop its content and keep it current. “These people take the state’s Web presence very seriously, and they understand its importance to Oregonians,” Petty said. “They also understand that state government—like businesses in the private sector—will increase its reliance on the Web in the years and decades ahead.”

The full report on the rankings of the states’ Web sites is available at:

- <http://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~egovinst/Website/PDFs/US%20State%20Survey%20%28Full%20Report%29.pdf>