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Oregon's rural-urban divide has give and take

Economies, politics tied together in many ways, studies find

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SALEM - According to a Portland economist, Oregon's rural-urban divide is more than a perception perpetrated by influence policy and politics in Salem. It's quantifiable.

Rural Oregon, according to Joe Cortright, depends on Portland to fund its schools, health care and social services

In a presentation at a rural-urban conference in Salem last week, Cortright said the state's general fund, which help derives a disproportionate amount of its revenue from the Portland metropolitan area.

"The recipients of these funds are disproportionately located outside metropolitan Portland," Cortright said. About 5 to pay for education and health care in the remainder of the state.

The report from Cortright was part of the Toward One Oregon conference Nov. 14 at the Salem Conference Center rural and urban Oregon.

Oregon State University President Ed Ray in his opening remarks said rural and urban Oregon are intertwined cultures

"We're all in this together," Ray said. "It's not us and them: It's us. There is a lot less that divides us than unites us.

Sheila Martin, director of the Institute of Portland Metropolitan Studies for Portland State University, highlighted clusters forest products industries, for example, utilize natural resources from rural areas in combination with urban service support and transportation.

"Our futures are interwoven, and decisions about one place may influence the success or failure of the other," Martin said. rural studies for OSU.

Cortright highlighted the connection between rural and urban Oregon in his economic breakdown of the state's general

The Portland metro area contributes about \$1.72 billion annually in personal and corporate taxes and lottery revenue billion in state support, he said. The difference - about \$450 million - is revenue from economic activity in the Portland the state.

Similarly, Cortright said, the metropolitan area contributes about \$432 million toward the cost of the Oregon Health annual outflow of \$97 million.

The conference was sponsored by Oregon State University, Portland State University, Eastern Oregon University, Foundation.

Scott Reed, dean and director OSU's Extension Service, said the conference's 200 or so participants are evaluatin

"I thought the Toward One Oregon conference was enormously helpful at starting a conversation around the histor Oregon, not separate Oregon," Reed said. "The conference was a beginning. It represents a journey, not a destin

Beth Emshoff, metro extension specialist for OSU, said OSU Press plans to publish a book of conference present

"The major universities who sponsored this conference are going to continue to work on this issue," she said.

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