

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Achieving the Oregon Shines Vision

2009 Benchmark Report to the People of Oregon

This ninth biennial evaluation explores whether we, as a state, are making progress toward our statewide goals. The goals come from *Oregon Shines*, the state’s 20-year, strategic plan.

IN A NUTSHELL

IS OREGON MAKING PROGRESS?

Oregon continues to rate positively in public safety and built environment, but aspects of the economy, education, civic engagement, social support and the natural environment point out a continuation of challenges seen in the 2007 report.

Of the seven benchmark categories, economy worsened from the last report. The other six categories fare the same.

One factor affecting Oregon’s progress is the changing demographic makeup of the state. Oregon’s growing diversity brings new and important challenges. We believe these challenges are showing up in data for such benchmarks as per capita income, student skill levels, adult educational attainment, prenatal care, poverty and affordable housing.¹

¹ For more information, see the Progress Board’s *Race and Ethnicity Report* (June 2008).

Oregon’s Progress toward the Oregon Shines Goals				
Oregon Shines Goals:	2003 Report	2005 Report	2007 Report	2009 Report
<i>Goal 1: Quality Jobs for All Oregonians</i>				
Economy	Yes, but	Yes, but	Yes, but	No, but
Education	Yes	Yes, but	No, but	No, but
<i>Goal 2: Engaged, Caring and Safe Communities</i>				
Civic Engagement	No, but	No, but	No, but	No, but
Social Support	Yes, but	Yes, but	No, but	No, but
Public Safety	Yes, but	Yes, but	Yes, but	Yes, but
<i>Goal 3: Healthy, Sustainable Surroundings</i>				
Built Environment	No, but	Yes, but	Yes, but	Yes, but
Natural Environment	Yes, but	Yes, but	No, but	No, but

GOAL #1: Quality Jobs for All Oregonians

Two benchmark categories, *Economy* and *Education* measure progress toward Goal #1. *Economy* gets a “No, but,” its first drop in grade since the 2003 report. The current economic crisis, while just beginning to show up in our yearly data, weakened both the business vitality and income indicators. *Education*, the other half of the equation, retains its “No, but” grade from the 2007 report. Although the percent of adults with high school and college degrees is gradually increasing, the K-12 benchmarks confirm the challenges currently being tackled by Oregon’s education enterprise. Lower-than-targeted levels of workforce training also contribute to the education grade.

Notable improvements and concerns for Goal #1:

- *Economy’s notable strength is export stability.* Oregon’s network of trading partners has become increasingly diverse over the last decade. Not all of our export eggs are in the same basket. Among other things, this should help our economy recover. *The notable concern is per capita personal income,* the same concern as in the 2007 report. At 90.7 percent of the national average, this key benchmark has been in decline since the mid-1990s and has reached a 16-year low.

- Data underpinning this report do not reveal a benchmark that we feel is a “notable improvement” for education. The closest candidate is benchmark #22, Oregon’s high school dropout rate. This saw significant improvements in the 1990s and has stayed low since the early 2000s. However, it still is shy of the 2010 target. One *notable concern is eighth-grade reading,* where only 65 percent of eighth-graders achieved grade-level standards, well below the 2010 target of 80 percent.



GOAL #2: Engaged, Caring and Safe Communities

Data for *Civic Engagement*, *Social Support*, and *Public Safety* benchmarks support the same grades for Goal #2 as in the 2007 report. For example, in *Civic Engagement*, fewer and fewer Oregonians can correctly identify the primary source of state revenues (personal income tax) and the largest general fund expenditure (education). Despite Oregon's high ranking for voting and the historic nature of the 2008 election, Oregon saw a drop in the estimate of eligible voters participating in this presidential election. In *Social Support*, data reveal continued concerns related to children's health and protection, and poverty. However in *Public Safety*, progress continues to be made in crime categories and emergency preparedness.



Notable strengths and concerns for Goal #2:

- Civic Engagement's *notable strength is volunteering*. About one-third of all Oregonians engaged in a volunteer activity in the last three-year estimate. *A notable concern is that 88 percent of Oregonians lack a basic understanding of the state's tax system*, a new decade low.
- Social Support's *notable improvement is the increasing rate of adult non-smokers*, which improved five percentage points in the last 10 years. Its *notable concern is hunger*. Oregon's previously improving hunger situation has worsened again. In November 2008, Oregon was once again ranked as one of the hungriest states in the nation.
- Public Safety's *notable improvement is emergency preparedness*. The dedication of Oregon's municipalities, in conjunction with state and federal officials, has resulted in better-prepared communities throughout Oregon. *A notable concern is the sharp increase in the percent of teenagers self-reporting that they carried a weapon* in the past 30 days.

GOAL #3: Healthy, Sustainable Surroundings

Built Environment and *Natural Environment* benchmarks gauge progress toward Goal #3. *Built Environment* gets a “Yes, but” for 2009, the same grade given in 2007. Oregon continues to do a good job on traffic-related benchmarks. However, the Oregon Transportation Commission indicates future improvement will be difficult due to a growing maintenance backlog and increasing costs. *Natural Environment* retains the “No, but” grade first given in 2007. Benchmarks for air quality and CO₂ emissions continue to show a lack of progress. The indicators for water and land again show mixed progress - some improvements tempered by concerns. Numerous indicators in the Natural Environment category lack new or recent data.

Notable strengths and concerns for Goal #3:

- Built Environment’s *notable improvement continues to be state road condition*. The percentage of state roads in fair or better condition reached 87 percent in 2006. The *notable concern is affordable housing*. In 2007, more than half of both lower-income owners and renters spent 30 percent or more of their household income on housing costs.

- Natural Environment’s *notable strength is the first-time release of natural habitat estimates* (Oregon Benchmark #89). The creation and release of this data by Oregon’s Institute for Natural Resources is an enormous step toward understanding the changes over time to natural habitats in Oregon’s numerous eco-regions. The state’s *notable concern is air quality*. In recent years, Oregon has experienced an increase in the number of days where air quality is harmful, particularly to sensitive groups (primarily the elderly, children, and those with respiratory challenges).

