ODOT PROJECT COMMUNICATIONS SURVEY

MARCH 2003

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

SURVEY RESULTS

OREGON SURVEY RESEARCH LABORATORY
5245 UNIVERSITY OF OREGON
EUGENE, OR 97403-5245
TELEPHONE: 541-346-0824
FACSIMILE: 541-346-5026
EMAIL: osrl@uoregon.edu
WWW: http://osrl.uoregon.edu/

ROBERT CHOQUETTE, PROJECT DIRECTOR
PATRICIA A. GWARTNEY, PH.D., DIRECTOR
ASSISTED BY DANIEL BURGHART, PROJECT DIRECTOR

INTRODUCTION

In October 2002, the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) contracted with the University of Oregon Survey Research Laboratory (OSRL) to conduct the "ODOT Project Communications Survey." The study's goal was to obtain statistically valid and reliable information concerning a wide variety of transportation issues. Working closely with ODOT representatives, John Jackley and Karen Jones, OSRL planned, pretested and implemented a telephone survey with 1,206 Oregon adults.

This report summarizes the survey design, sampling methodology, data collection, provides a demographic profile of survey respondents, and summarizes the study's main findings.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

This section describes OSRL's procedures for developing and implementing the telephone survey instrument, the sampling to conduct this representative study, and the actual data collection.

SURVEY INSTRUMENT DEVELOPMENT

The survey's broad goals were to obtain information on Oregonians' transportation-related opinions, perceptions, and behaviors. ODOT and OSRL consulted closely in the iterative process of developing, pretesting, revising, and finalizing survey questions, exercising special care to ensure that certain survey questions directly paralleled those on previous ODOT surveys and national surveys; many questions, however, are OSRL originals.

The final survey instrument comprised the following specific subject areas:

1. Global **feelings** toward and trust in ODOT.
2. **Satisfaction** with Oregon's highway conditions in the last 12 months, how ODOT communicates with the public about construction and road closures, and DMV service.

3. **Ratings** of ODOT's maintenance of highways, roads, and bridges; communication to the public about construction zones and road closures; planning to meet the state's transportation needs; and reduction of traffic accidents, injuries, and deaths.
4. **Opinions** about Oregon's highways, roads, and bridges compared to other states.
5. **Opinions** about several possible policy changes implemented by the DMV.
6. Respondents' use and opinions of **ODOT's World Wide Web site**.
7. Preferred **modes of receiving information** and news about ODOT and transportation issues.
8. **Basic demographic data**, including location (county and urban-rural community), years of residence in Oregon, age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, employment, and number of licensed drivers in the household.

The survey instrument is extensively pretested using OSRL's standard three-pronged pretest procedure, involving (a) potential members of the survey population, (b) OSRL's Questionnaire Review Committee, comprised of survey experts from our staff and university-wide advisory committee, and (c) potential users of the data, including ODOT personnel. Individual questions were pretested for clarity, accuracy, validity, and variability of response. The entire instrument was pretested for flow, length, comprehensiveness, and factors affecting respondents' cooperation and attention. Based on these pretests, the survey instrument was revised and finalized.

The survey was programmed in OSRL's computer-aided telephone interviewing system (CATI), and further pretested. All interviews were completely anonymous. Human subjects approval was obtained from the University of Oregon's Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects. A facsimile of the final survey instrument appears in the "Toplines" section of this documentation.

SAMPLING

OSRL's sampling procedure employs a random-digit-dialing (RDD) algorithm that was used in conjunction with our computer-aided telephone interviewing system (CATI). Sampling was pre-programmed and accomplished without interviewers' intervention. Telephone numbers were generated randomly by the computer and appear automatically on interviewers' computer screens. Telephone calls are placed with a computer keystroke, effectively preventing dialing errors. This sampling system avoids biases encountered from telephone books and similar lists. In addition, new and unlisted telephone numbers have an equal chance of being selected as established numbers.

For this study, 5,104 telephone numbers were randomly generated. Of those, 53% were ineligible, i.e., disconnected, non-working, non-residential, fax/modem, or other types of telephone lines unsuitable for completing a survey. Completed interviews comprised 24% of all randomly generated numbers. For 20%, the telephone is consistently busy or never answered, and thus their suitability for interviewing could not be ascertained. Just 3% of all telephone numbers resulted in refusals.

DATA COLLECTION

Interviewer training was conducted on March 4, 2003. Interviewing was conducted March 5 – March 27, 2003. A maximum of 29 calls was made to each randomly generated telephone number to avoid nonresponse bias. Interviewing was conducted 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays and 2:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Sundays until the target sample was achieved. CATI automatically schedules calls that don't result in interviews for different times of the day and different days of the week, or interviewers can schedule interviews for respondents at a more convenient date and time.

Altogether, OSRL interviewers placed 28,393 telephone calls to complete 1,206 interviews with adults in randomly chosen Oregon households[1]. The overall survey response rate is 68% and the refusal rate is 9%.[2] Completed interviews range from six to 42 minutes and averaged 13 minutes, with a standard deviation of four minutes. Surveys were only conducted in English.

Survey sampling errors are calculated to assist data users in assessing how much confidence to place in a particular survey result. Large random samples, as in this study, reduce sampling error. Results for surveys in which there is low variability also have less sampling error. For example, a variable with a 50/50 proportional split has wider confidence intervals than a variable with a 5/95 proportional split.

For this study, the margin of error for an unweighted variable from the entire sample with a 50-50 proportional split is $\pm$2.8 percentage points, at the 95% confidence level. This means readers of the data can be 95% sure that the true population figure is between 47.2% and 52.8% (i.e., 50% $\pm$2.8 percentage points). The margin of error for an unweighted variable from the entire sample with a 5/95 proportional split is $\pm$1.2 percentage points, at the 95% confidence level.

SURVEY RESULTS

This section presents an executive summary of the telephone survey's main findings about Oregon households and residents. More detailed analysis may be conducted by examining the banner tables in Section 6 of the three-ring binder and the raw Excel data file. Before presenting the substantive findings, we provide a demographic, social, and economic context for the results of randomly selected households and survey respondents, beginning in Figure 1.

[1] The sample comprises 1,204 completed interviews plus two "partial" interviews; because the latter were substantially completed, they were included with the final dataset.

[2] The response rate is calculated in following manner: Completed interviews / (Eligible sample + ((Eligible sample / (Eligible sample + Ineligible sample)) * Sample with unknown status)). Section 4 of the report binder illustrates OSRL's calculations in greater detail.

PROFILE OF RANDOMLY SELECTED HOUSEHOLDS AND SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Household Composition and Location: The survey contains several questions about respondent's household composition and location, which can be used to explain variation in survey findings. Figure 1 summarizes the results.

The number of licensed drivers in households ranged from zero to six, with a mode of two and an average of 1.9 licensed drivers.

Over 38% of respondents say they live in urban areas, while 32% say they live in suburban areas, 22% in rural areas, and 6% on farms and ranches.

Examining survey respondents' distribution across ODOT regions, we see that 43% reside in Region 1 – the Portland tri-county area, 29% reside in Region 2 – the Willamette Valley, 13% live in Region 3 – southwestern Oregon, 9% in Region 4 – the central state counties, and just 5% live in Region 5 –Oregon's least inhabited eastern counties.

Respondent Characteristics: The survey included a series of demographic questions, which also are useful in explaining variation in survey findings. Figures 2 and 3 summarize those results.

The sample's sex composition is 56% female and 43% male, while the state's adult population is 51% female, and 49% male. Such sex disparities are common in household surveys, for women tend to be more survey compliant, more often at home, and more likely to answer household telephones. Importantly, neither the sex composition nor the age composition of the sample is outside standard 95% confidence intervals for sampling error.

A different way of looking at the sample's age composition is by birth cohort, defined by birth year. Birth cohorts share common historical, economic, cultural and social histories. In this sample, 9% were born prior to the Great Depression (before 1929), 22% were born during the Great Depression and World War II era, 35% were born in the post World War II Baby Boom, and 33% may be considered part of the Baby Bust cohort.

For labor force status, 63% of respondents are employed, 5% unemployed and looking for work, and 31% are out of the labor force (i.e., retired, homemakers, disabled, students, or otherwise neither working nor looking for work). The latter included 19% retired, 6% keeping house, 2% taking classes, 3% unable to work due to disability, 1% doing something else.

In educational attainment, over 70% of respondents attended college. Thirty-five percent attended "some college" or completed an associate's degree, 24% achieved a bachelor's degree, and 11% finished a masters, doctorate, or professional degree. Twenty-two percent stopped their education with a high school diploma or GED and just 6% don't complete high school.

Over 88% of survey respondents report their race as white/Caucasian, 1.5% as Black/African American, 2.4% as Asian American/Pacific Islander, 2.4% as Latino/Hispanic/Chicano, and 1.4% as American Indian/Native American. An additional 1.5% says they are mixed race, biracial, and "other" race.

We also ask respondents how long they have lived in Oregon. Nineteen percent say they have lived in Oregon 10 or fewer years (including 2% less than one year), 18% have lived here 11-20 years, and 20% 21-30 years. Fully 43% of respondents have lived in Oregon 31 or more years.

OPINIONS OF ODOT

The first question asks respondents about their feelings toward ODOT. Thirteen percent express "very" positive feelings, 62% express "somewhat" positive feelings, 12% "somewhat" negative feelings, and 3% "very" negative feelings, as shown in Figure 4.

Male respondents tend to express more negative feelings than females. Regional distributions of respondent's feelings about ODOT are fairly homogeneous, with the majority (over 60% in all regions) of respondents saying they are "very" or "somewhat" positive toward ODOT. General feelings about ODOT are highly correlated with responses to how often respondents trust ODOT. Specifically, for respondents who feel "somewhat" positive about ODOT, 80% of these trust ODOT often or sometimes; 82% of respondents who feel "very" negative towards ODOT also say they sometimes or rarely trust ODOT. Analogous results are observed for responses to ODOT's accountability to the taxpayers.

Next, the survey asks a series of questions about the respondent's satisfaction with ODOT and their evaluation of ODOT's accountability to the taxpayer (see Figure 5). The survey asks how satisfied respondents are with the conditions of the Oregon highways they have used in the past 12 months. Nineteen percent report they are "very" satisfied, 57% are "somewhat" satisfied, 17% are "not very" satisfied, and 5% are "not at all" satisfied.

This question follows the trend of the previous satisfaction and attitude questions, with those who respond positively toward ODOT trusting ODOT, and their accountability tends to respond positively to their overall satisfaction with Oregon highways in the last 12 months. Regional distributions of satisfaction were relatively homogeneous, with Region Five respondents showing slightly greater satisfaction with Oregon highways than average. Satisfaction distributions across age groups showed relative homogeneity.

The next question deals with ODOT's accountability to taxpayers. Nearly 16% of respondents feel ODOT is "very" accountable to taxpayers, while 52% think ODOT is "somewhat" accountable. Sixteen percent feel ODOT is "not very" accountable and 6% feel ODOT is "not at all" accountable. The survey asks respondents in the last two categories why they feel that way. Section 7, ***Narrative Answers to Open-Ended Questions*** contains their responses to this question.

Over 30% of respondents are "very" satisfied with how ODOT communicates with the public about construction projects and road closures, while 54% are "somewhat" satisfied,

10% are "not very" satisfied, and less than 2% are "not at all" satisfied. The survey asks respondents in the last two categories why they feel that way. Section 7, ***Narrative Answers to Open-Ended Questions,*** contains their responses to this question.

Males and females respond nearly identically to how well ODOT informs them about construction projects and road closures. Respondents who trust ODOT and think them accountable tended to answer positively regarding how well ODOT informs them about road closures.

The last question of this section asks about satisfaction with the DMV. Forty-four percent of respondents are "very" satisfied with the customer service they receive at the DMV, while 36% are "somewhat" satisfied, 11% are "not very" satisfied, and less than 5% are "not at all" satisfied.

Thirty-two percent of respondents in the 18-29 age cohort say they are "very satisfied" with DMV, which is quite a bit less than the overall average of 44% of respondents who are "very satisfied" with DMV. Again, respondent's trust correlates strongly and positively with feelings for ODOT's accountability and their satisfaction with DMV.

DMV POLICIES

Three additional questions ask respondents about policy issues at the DMV. Figure 6 shows the results.

The survey informs respondents that DMV currently requires two acceptable proofs of identification before issuing a driver license or identification card, and asks if the DMV should strengthen its verification of a person's identity, even if it leads to longer waits. Fifty-eight percent of respondents believe the DMV should strengthen their requirements, while 39% don't believe in strengthening requirements. Less than 3% "don't know".

Across regions, response distribution is nearly constant, deviating less than 3% from average in every region. Younger age cohorts answer "no" relatively less than older age cohorts with those 18 to 29 answering "no" 53% and "yes" 47%, while in the 70 or older cohort only 24% answer "no" with 70% answering "yes."

The following question asks if the respondent supports the DMV requiring people to give their Social Security number in order to verify their identity when issuing a driver's license or ID card. Nearly 62% support the requirement, while 34% don't. Three percent "don't know".

The younger age cohorts answer in the affirmative relatively more than respondents in older age cohorts. For example, respondents in the 18-29 and 30-39 age cohorts answer "yes" 72%, while respondents in the 70 or older age cohort answer "yes" only 35%. Respondents in Region Two answer "yes" relatively more than in any other region (64%) while those in Region Five answer "no" relatively more than in any other region (43%).

The last question in this group asks respondents if the DMV should deny driver licenses and ID cards to people who can prove their identity but cannot prove U.S. citizenship. The responses to this question divide more evenly. Fifty-four percent of respondents supported a requirement to deny driver licenses and ID cards to people who can prove their identity but cannot prove U.S. citizenship, while 39% don't. Almost 6% "don't know".

Most respondents believe that the DMV should deny driver's licenses and ID cards to non-citizens. Retired respondents, who represent one of the largest differences, answer "yes" 61% and "no" 29% (with "Don't Know /No Answer /Refused" at 10%).

ODOT COMMUNICATION

Figure 7 shows the results of two questions asking respondents to rate ODOT's communication and maintenance. The first question asks how good a job they think ODOT does maintaining existing highways, roads, and bridges. Nearly 10% think ODOT does an excellent job at maintaining existing structures, while 44% feel ODOT does a good job, 35% a fair job, and 8% a poor job.

The survey asks respondents about road construction and maintenance projects that involve detours, delays, traffic changes, and road closures that impact local businesses and livability. Overall, 26% feel that ODOT does an excellent job of keeping them informed about work in construction zones and any resulting road closures and delays. Forty-four percent feel ODOT does a good job, while 19% feel ODOT does a fair job, and 7% a poor job.

ODOT SAFETY AND PLANNING

Two questions ask survey respondents about how well ODOT does regarding safety and planning issues. Figure 8 shows the results. The first question asks respondents how good a job they think ODOT does reducing traffic accidents, injuries, and deaths. Sixteen percent feel ODOT does a "very good" job, 60% feel ODOT does a "somewhat good" job, 10% a "somewhat bad" job, and 2% a "very bad" job.

Responses to this question follow the trends outlined above with positive responses highly correlated with positive responses to other questions and vice versa. For example, 92% of respondents who trust ODOT "always" also say that ODOT is doing a "somewhat" or "very good" job", and of those who think ODOT "very accountable", 85% also say ODOT is doing a "somewhat" or ""very good" job" reducing accidents. By sex, people respond to how well they think ODOT is reducing accidents almost identically, with no more than 2% variation in responses.

The next question asks how well the respondents think ODOT does in planning to meet the state's future transportation needs. Ten percent feel ODOT does a "very good" job, 47% feel ODOT does a "somewhat good" job, 21% a "somewhat bad" job, and 7% a "very bad" job.

Again, positive answers to other questions tend to correlate with positive responses to how well ODOT plans for future needs. Sixty percent of respondents in Region Five say that ODOT is doing a "somewhat good" job planning for future needs, a stark contrast to the average over all regions of 47%. Females are slightly more positive in how they feel towards ODOT planning for future needs in comparison to males.

TRUST

Can respondents trust ODOT? To find out, the survey asks respondents if they can trust ODOT to do what is right (see Figure 9). Almost 12% feel ODOT always does what is right, 40% think ODOT often does what is right, while 31% feel ODOT sometimes does what is right. The survey asks these three groups of respondents, as well as 9% who "don't know", why they feel that way in a follow-up question. Section 7, ***Narrative Answers to Open-Ended Questions,*** contains their responses to this question. Five percent of respondents feel ODOT rarely does what is right.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

To determine opinions of ODOT's fiscal responsibility, the survey asks respondents how well they think ODOT spends the taxpayers' money. As Figure 10 shows, 12% feel ODOT does "very" well, 53% feel ODOT does "somewhat" well, and nearly 11% "don't know". Section 7, ***Narrative Answers to Open-Ended Questions,*** contains their responses to a question asking why they feel that way. Eighteen percent think ODOT does "not very" well at spending the taxpayers' money, and 4% think ODOT does "not at all" well.

The next question asks respondents to rate ODOT's bridge and construction projects. Figure 11 shows those results. The first question asks the importance of fixing Oregon's deteriorating bridges. Respondents feel strongly about this question, as 80% think it's "very" important to fix Oregon's deteriorating bridges. Sixteen percent feel it's "somewhat" important, less than 2% feel it's "not very" important, and 0.3% feel it's "not at all" important.

Over 90% of those who distrusted ODOT and think ODOT isn't accountable think it's "somewhat" or "very" important to fix Oregon's bridges. These results also hold across age, sex, and region. In households with zero licensed drivers, 7% say it's "not at all" important to fix Oregon's bridges, as opposed to the overall average of 0.4%.

The survey asks respondents how important it is that ODOT communicate with them about road construction and maintenance projects. Sixty-eight percent think it's "very" important, an additional 25% feel it's "somewhat" important, four percent feel it's "not very" important, and only one percent feel it's "not at all" important.

Over 90% of respondents say that it's "somewhat" or "very" important that ODOT communicate about construction projects. This statement also holds by region, sex, and age, although 10% of households with zero licensed drivers think it "not very important"

as opposed to the 4% average for this response category. Even those who respond negatively to how often they trust ODOT, and think it accountable, held to this finding.

The survey asks everyone except the one percent who feel communication from ODOT is "not at all" important the following: "When a road construction project could affect the areas where you live and work, would you prefer that ODOT communicate with you about it mainly when the project starts, or all the way through the life of the project?" Nearly 32% feel ODOT should communicate about it mainly when the project starts, while 64% feel ODOT should communicate all the way through.

The survey asks respondents how they compare the overall condition of Oregon's highways, roads and bridges to other states. Figure 12 shows that 27% feel Oregon does a better job than other states, 15% feel Oregon does about the same as other states, and 46% think Oregon does a worse job than other states. Nine percent volunteered that they never travel out of state.

While most respondents are indifferent to the difference between Oregon's roads, in comparison to other states (an average of 46%), 46% of those in Region Five say they are "better", as opposed to the average across all regions of 27%.

The next question asks about the best sources of information from ODOT about a road construction project that could affect the areas where respondent's live and work. As Figure 13 shows, 25% of respondents prefer direct mail to their home or workplace, while 16% favor daily newspapers.

When asks what would be their favorite way to receive information and news about ODOT and transportation issues in Oregon, nearly 19% prefer direct mail to their home or workplace, and 16% each prefer television and daily newspapers.

The survey asks respondents in a follow-up question about what ODOT can do to improve the way it communicates with you, and other citizens, about highway and bridge projects. Section 7, ***Narrative Answers to Open-Ended Questions,*** contains their responses to this question.

It's important to be able to differentiate between ODOT and other utility vehicles in construction areas. The survey asks respondents if they can usually tell the difference between an ODOT project and road projects done by the city, county or a local utility. Nearly 39 percent can tell the difference, while 58% can't tell the difference between ODOT projects and other projects. Less than 3% "don't know".

ODOT AND THE WORLD WIDE WEB:

The last section of the survey concerns ODOT and its presence on the World Wide Web, with results beginning on Figure 14.

The first question asks respondents if they are able to connect to the Internet or World Wide Web at their home, on the job, at school, at the public library, or some other public

place. Eighty percent of respondents answer affirmatively, while another 2% volunteer that they are able to, but choose not to.

The overwhelming majority of respondents say they can connect to the Internet at home, work, school, or the library. Response distributions by age are as expected, with younger age cohorts answering "yes" relatively more than older age cohorts. Those who are retired or disabled say they can connect to the Internet 51% and 62%, respectively. Only 29% of households with zero licensed drivers can connect to the Internet.

Among those who are able to connect online, the survey next asks if they had done so in the past six months. Ninety percent indicate they had connected in the last six months to the Internet. Only this population answers the remaining questions in this section.

Region Three represented the fewest (relative) respondents who connected to the Internet in the last six months with 85%. Respondents follow similar patterns as their ability to connect to the Internet, with those in the 70 or older age cohort answering "yes" only 61%, and 77% of retired respondents answering "yes".

Thirty percent of respondents indicate they had visited ODOT's website. This population is asked how they would rate the overall appearance of ODOT's website. Figure 15 shows that nearly 21% of respondents rate ODOT's website excellent, while 52% rate it good, 16% fair, and less than 1% poor. Nearly 10% of respondents "don't know", or don't remember, ODOT's home page.

Thirty-five percent of males respond "yes" to this question, while 27% of females respond "yes". Respondents in the 30 to 39, 40 to 49, and 50 to 59 age cohorts all respond "yes" 32% or more, while those in the 18 to 29 and 70 and older age cohorts respond "yes" 23% or less. Respondents in Regions Four and Five visit the ODOT web site more than respondents in Regions One, Two, and Three. Thirty-three percent of those who are employed respond "yes", while 27% who are not employed responded "yes".

Region One had the largest number of respondents familiar with the ODOT home page (102 valid responses). Respondent's assessment of the overall appearance of the ODOT home page doesn't vary at a significant level by age, sex, or region. In general, however, respondents in the 18-29 and 60-69 age cohorts more frequently rate the ODOT home page as "excellent," while more than half of individuals aged 30-59 rate the ODOT page as "good." Only two respondents rate the ODOT home page "poor" in comparison to other websites.

The survey asks respondents who remember visiting ODOT's home page how they rate its overall usefulness. Thirty-one percent rate the page excellent, 49% rate it good, 15% rate it fair, and 1% rate it poor.

Evaluations of the usefulness of the ODOT home page don't vary at a significant level by age or sex. However, responses significantly differed by region. Respondents in regions 2-5 more frequently rate the usefulness of the ODOT home page as "excellent," while 55%

and 19% of region 1 respondents rated the page's usefulness as "good" or "fair," respectively.

ODOT wanted to know if consistency across their web pages is important to respondents. The next question asks if respondents care if ODOT's web pages differ in the way they look, as long as they can get the information they want. Only 5% care if the pages differ, while over 94% don't care if the pages differ.

By region, age, and sex, 90% of respondents answered "no" to this question with the exception of those in the 30 to 39 age cohort (88% of whom responded "no") and those in the 70 or older age cohort (86% of whom responded "no").

The survey asks respondents if it's important that ODOT's various web pages have the same look and feel (see Figure 16). Fifty-seven percent of respondents feel it's "very" important, nearly 36% feel it's "somewhat" important, and 7% feel it's "not" important that the various web pages have the same look and feel.

Respondent's assessment of the importance of a consistent look and feel across the various ODOT web pages don't significantly differ by region, sex, or age. However, since there are only 14 valid responses for this question, these results shouldn't be generalized to the broader population.

The survey finally asks respondents in a follow-up question about what kind of transportation information they would like to see on ODOT's web site. Section 7, ***Narrative Answers to Open-Ended Questions,*** contains their responses to this question.