Report: Oregon shows increase in racial, ethnic diversity

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

SALEM, Ore. â€” The Oregon Progress Board reports that the state has become more racially and ethnically diverse over the past 15 years, and that Asians and Pacific Islandersâ€”compared to other diverse groupsâ€”have made the most progress. The 2008 Oregon Benchmark Race and Ethnicity Report shows improvement in the percentage of African American adults who have completed high school, along with a decreasing dropout rate. Crime has declined among all the racial groups. African Americans, Native Americans and Hispanics have fared less well in reaching the levels that white Oregonians enjoy for numerous measures of education, health and safety, and financial status, according to the report. The report is based on 15 indicators, a subset of the Oregon Benchmarks. "The Race and Ethnicity Report underscores the importance of helping all Oregonians, regardless of ethnic or racial background, achieve the benefits of living and working in Oregon," Governor Ted Kulongoski said. "We need to intensify our efforts to enable people of color take advantage of the Oregon Opportunity Grant program, which helps students handle the cost of a college education. We need to expand the Oregon Health Plan to ensure that every child in Oregon receives health care. If we enable minority citizens get a good education and ensure that their children are healthy and ready to learn, we'll empower all minority citizens to achieve financial parity with white citizens." The Race and Ethnicity Report examines such factors as educational success and attainment, healthcare, crime, homeownership, and poverty. College completion rates among adults of color have remained level or declined over the past 15 years, and home ownership among Hispanics and other ethnic groups has lagged behind the national average for these groups, according to the report. The Hispanic population, Oregon's fastest growing ethnic group, faces severe challenges across all indicators except crime. Four of the ten benchmarks examined are based on survey data from the U.S. Census, while the six remaining are gathered through state sources. The report appears on the Oregon Progress Board's web site, http://benchmarks.oregon.gov