

Population growing older

'Tsunami' of 60-plus adults expected to hit Oregon by 2020

By SEBASTIAN DE ASSIS
For the Regal Courier

There is a tsunami heading towards Oregon that will hit even the three most eastern counties of the state.

The mammoth swell is not coming from the ocean but from an age wave that will transform the sociological landscape of Oregon.

According to the state's Office of Economic Analysis, by 2020 one in five Oregonians will be 60 years and older, and by 2030 this age group ratio increases to one in four residents.

The category of older adults between the ages of 60 and 74 is predicted to grow to 800,000 in 2040 compared to 350,000 in 2000.

"This aging population trend will have profound impact on all aspects of the state's socioeconomic infrastructure," said Sebastian de Assis, the executive director of Elder Empowerment Edge, an aging-services agency based in Corvallis.

"Understanding the complex ramifications of this demographic transformation is of the essence to the welfare of individuals, organizations and communities."

Tantamount to preparing for natural disasters, it is important to plan and implement effective strategies to assuage the impact that this age wave will trigger in all facets of social life.

From individuals in rural communities to large corporations coping with the aging of the workforce and developing new products and services to a growing class of older consumers, tackling the critical issue of an aging society has become imperative to long-term planning.

"By the very nature of the demographic transformation, aging services have become a necessity of life," said de Assis. "There was a time when elders had to adapt to their new social situation. Today, by sheer virtue of their massive numbers, it is society that must adapt to their needs."

Elder Empowerment Edge is an aging-services agency committed to empowering individuals, organizations and communities through the aging process.

For more information about the agency, visit its website at www.elderempowermentedge.com, email info@elderempowermentedge.com or call 541-908-1418.