

Insurance Division, 350 Winter St. NE, Room 200, Salem, Oregon 97301-3878

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For more information:
Cheryl Martinis (503) 947-7213
Public Information Officer

Oregon home insurance costs below national average

(Salem) — At an average cost of \$502 per year, home insurance in Oregon is among the least costly in the nation, according to a nationwide survey. For example, the average homeowner's premium was \$1,257 in Louisiana and \$603 in neighboring Washington. The average premium nationwide was \$804, and Oregon ranked 48th lowest out of the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

“Oregon is a competitive market for homeowner insurers and that helps keep premiums low,” said Teresa Miller, acting administrator of the Oregon Insurance Division.

The 2006 data, the most recent available, was provided Monday by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC). The costs to insure a home reflect everything from property values to risks of such disasters as tornadoes, hurricanes, freezing rain and terrorist attacks. The report noted that Oregon home insurance costs increased slightly from an average \$491 in 2005.

Renters' insurance averaged \$162 a year in Oregon compared to \$189 nationally, according to the report. That amounts to less than \$14 monthly for a policy that protects against everything from fire to theft. Like homeowner policies, renters' insurance also provides liability coverage if someone has an accident in your apartment or rental home. The property owner's policy covering the building you live in typically does *not* cover your property.

These numbers reported in the survey are averages; premiums for individual homeowners and renters may be higher or lower.

“Even though average premiums in Oregon are low, homeowners still may be able to save money by shopping around for insurance,” Miller said. “Premiums can vary widely from company to company.”

Other tips to save money include:

- If your home's value is declining, you may want to review your policy to see if you can insure a lesser amount. However, even if your home's market value has dropped, it doesn't mean the cost to replace your home has also dropped. If you have a replacement cost policy, your insurance company probably will require you to maintain adequate insurance to re-build your home at today's costs.
- Homeowner policies don't protect your land so make sure the value of the land isn't included as part of your coverage amount.
- Verify that you receive any discounts to which you are entitled, whether it is because you are 55 or older and retired or you have smoke detectors, deadbolts and fire alarms.
- Also, you can reduce your premium by increasing your deductible. However, make sure you can pay the higher deductible if disaster strikes and check first with your lender to see if the company limits the size of your deductible.

For more information on homeowners and renters' insurance visit:

<http://insurance.oregon.gov/publications/consumer/3253.pdf>. The Insurance Division also has consumer

advocates who can help Oregonians who have questions about their insurance or believe they are being treated unfairly by insurers or agents. You can reach the advocates at 503-947-7984 or toll-free at 888-877-4894.

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