

As a longtime resident of Corvallis and father of four grown children, I could easily write a lengthy letter of personal anecdotes extolling the virtues of Osborn Aquatic Center (OAC). I know, however, that you have already and will continue to receive dozens of these types of letters, and so I would like to instead share the depth and breadth of the positive impact of OAC in our state.

Jobs: OAC has provided the first job experience for hundreds kids. Lifeguarding at OAC provides teenagers with flexible hours and decent pay while providing a valuable service to our community. In addition, many members of the Corvallis Aquatic Team have become swim lesson and water-based exercise class instructors. Again, good job opportunities that provide valuable community services.

Tourism: Events hosted by OAC frequently draw participants not just from all parts of Oregon, but from Washington, Idaho, California, Montana, Nevada, Alaska and Hawaii. These participants and their families bring money into the state – often planning family vacations around an event at Osborn. It is no surprise that hotels in Corvallis spend quite a bit of advertising money to be event sponsors. There is also a trickle down effect, as these families spread the word about their positive experiences in Corvallis and Oregon with their friends and neighbors.

Indirect Benefits: You will have seen many references to water safety, but it is worth mentioning yet again. What is the life of even a single child worth? It is a cold, hard fact that without OAC many children will not learn to swim that otherwise would have. I've already mentioned the positive impact on businesses, but this extends to Oregon State University as well. There are students at OSU whose first exposure to the University came while attending an event at Osborn.

Financial: In addition to the items noted above, it should be pointed out that investment in OAC is not just a “cash out” proposition for the state. Every dollar spent on hotels, in restaurants, at gas stations...every dollar earned in a paycheck, every dollar paid to vendors by OAC...all of these generate tax revenue for the state. I used the word 'investment' specifically, because that is what allocation of lottery funds for this request would be – an investment, in Osborn Aquatic Center, Corvallis, the surrounding community, and indeed the entire state.

We appreciate the committee's consideration of this funding request and are hopeful you will include it in this bill.

Thank You,
Jon Soule'
Corvallis Resident
Controller for RENA Technologies NA LLC
Former Member, Corvallis Parks and Recreation Board
Past President, Corvallis Aquatic Team