

Ben Westlund  
State Treasurer  
[www.ost.state.or.us](http://www.ost.state.or.us)



---

***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***  
***Dec. 30, 2009***

Contact: Josh Balloch  
503-378-4329  
Josh.Balloch@state.or.us

## Treasurer lauds ‘remarkable year’ marked by job-creating bond sales program, college savings settlement, and leadership on financial transparency

*Portland business newspaper says ‘Ben Westlund has restored faith in the treasurer’s office’*

SALEM – The accomplishments of the Oregon State Treasury in 2009 are helping to create jobs, protect the public and save Oregonians money.

Families of college savers will share a landmark \$20 million settlement and an improved, lower-cost Oregon College Savings Plan. Oregonians and other retail buyers snapped up state bonds in record amounts as part of the new “Buy Oregon Bonds” campaign, and those proceeds are paying for job-creating projects across the state.

The Oregon Investment Council earned attention for the nation’s first set of principles that seek better terms and more transparency of private equity investments. The state filed lawsuits and pushed for corporate reforms to protect investors. And the state’s portfolio rebounded after the market collapse of 2008.

Those efforts were guided by the staff at the Oregon State Treasury under the leadership of Treasurer Ben Westlund, who was sworn in as the state’s 27<sup>th</sup> Treasurer in January.

“This has been a remarkable year for the Oregon State Treasury and ultimately for Oregon families and taxpayers, who will reap the rewards and save money,” Westlund said. “Our great state is being well-served by the stellar staff at the State Treasury.”

Efforts of the State Treasury were reported in national and regional publications. A Dec. 3 editorial in the *Portland Business Journal* said “Ben Westlund has restored faith in the

treasurer's office." A story in the June 1 edition of *Pensions and Investments* said "Oregon State Treasurer Ben Westlund is all about transparency."

Among the actions taken by the Treasurer, the State Treasury, and its boards and commissions:

- Issued more than \$1.7 billion in bonds to finance important public works projects that will put Oregonians to work today and build facilities that will improve the state's quality of life for decades. The proceeds from the low-cost bonds will help build a new state hospital in Salem, a new base for the Pacific fleet of NOAA in Newport, a Portland light rail extension to Milwaukie and road and bridge projects across the state.
- Created the new "Buy Oregon Bonds" campaign, which raised the profile of Oregon's secure credit rating and helped the state set new records for retail bond sales.
- Filed a lawsuit against Oppenheimer Funds for fraud and misrepresentation in connection with losses to families in the Oregon College Savings Plan, which were exacerbated because the company made risky bets with a supposedly conservative bond fund. The company agreed in November to a landmark settlement of \$20 million.
- Approved new oversight including an independent adviser and new lower-cost options in the Oregon College Savings Plan. A new program manager, TIAA-CREF, will start administering the plan in the first quarter of 2010.
- Oversaw investments that surged in value after the market slide in 2008. The value of the state's PERS fund gained \$10 billion in six months, from March 31 to September 30. Robust returns reduce the percentage of the pension obligations that are borne by taxpayers. Because of Treasury management, the Oregon Public Employee Retirement Fund was nominated this month as the Large Public Plan of the Year by Money Management Letter, a financial industry publication. The winner will be announced in February.
- Highlighted the efforts of the Oregon Growth Account and Oregon Investment Fund to invest in promising Oregon business startups that will be tomorrow's success stories – and will become engines for job creation. As part of those efforts, the Treasurer hosted a Big Idea Bash event in Portland to introduce entrepreneurs to potential financiers.
- Helped advocate for successful legislation (HB 2105) that allows for refinancing of certain public debt to save money, and another bill (HB 2106) that removed a costly obstacle facing some school construction projects.
- Committed to new levels of transparency, which include publishing more information on the Internet, highlighting the actions of the Oregon Investment Council, and revamping

the annual report. The annual report is available at  
<http://www.ost.state.or.us/FactsAndFigures/AnnualReports/>

- Filed a lawsuit against Swiss Bank UBS to recover \$55 million in lost stock value in the Oregon Public Employees Retirement Fund. The value of UBS stock dropped precipitously because the company engaged in international tax fraud.
- Expanded Oregon's role as a responsible shareholder in corporations and sought reforms that aid shareholders and hold executives more accountable. Among those actions, Oregon supported the proxy vote that helped to divide the roles of chief executive and bank president at Bank of America, which led to the ouster of the board chairman.

“Oregonians have much to be proud of ... and we will not stop now,” Westlund said. “Your Oregon State Treasury is continually working to build a better future and to save money for Oregon families, businesses and taxpayers.”

###