

MOUNT ST. HELENS TECHNICAL INFORMATION NETWORK

federal emergency
management agency

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BULLETIN #31 - "Economic Factors"

This bulletin is intended to explore the potential for economic impact of the Mount St. Helens eruptions. It raises issues for the long and short term, rather than settling them, and in no way attempts to assign dollar figures or generate real forecasts.

Some of the uncertainties are highly visible, such as:

- * Possibility of more eruptions.
- * Difficulty of separating effects of the volcano from those already or simultaneously caused by the recession or inflation.
- * Influence of various factors on future growth rates rather than on current costs.
- * Indirect loss, which experience with other phenomena shows to be frequently overestimated.

Most analyses to date have discussed tradeoffs, mainly in the long term:

- * The ashfall has damaged some crops, but will eventually enrich the soil.
- * Ash samples and commemorative T-shirts are selling well, illustrating talent for capitalizing on adversity. (Silver lining department).
- * Ceramics hobbyists and professionals are seeking the heaviest ash deposits for use in their wares, replacing expensive Italian imports.
- * Future generations of lawnmowers, air filters, and other hardware will stand up better to ash, but will doubtless cost

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