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Celebrating 24 years of Public Outreach of Science and Engineering in Portland Oregon

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There have been several core strategies in our highly successful 24-year Science, Technology and Society outreach program. However, the strategy for each season is also dynamic, requiring innovation and novel coalitions. As Bob Dylan put it so succinctly, “He not busy being born is busy dying.” Public outreach programs - as the Chautauquas of the past - should be positioned in the cultural milieu along with the opera, symphony and theatre. Support for the enterprise needs to be a broad and diverse coalition, based ideally on the creative formation of win-win relationship. You want people to see your success as their success: “Together we can enhance the intellectual environment in ways that none of us could do alone.” Being multi-disciplinary presents challenges but has considerable advantages. For instance, enlightened managers of established organizations recognize the value of exposing their employees to a diversity of problem solving approaches. Instead of inviting speakers for one large lecture we now invite them to be Resident Scholars for two-three days and develop a range of additional smaller public engagements. Science and engineering topics must be relevant - placed in the broader Science, Technology and Society framework. We avoid “gee-whiz” in favor of what stimulates reflection on who we are, where we came from, and our role in the universe. I will briefly review how we have survived and thrived and, finally, what I see as future trends and opportunities.