

The situation is further complicated by the essential role of immigrants, many of them from Mexico, in providing support services to resorts. Resorts struggle to recruit a labor force of maids, housekeepers, gardeners, janitors, and bellboys. If the patronage of resorts drops away in a recession, this will have an unsettling effect on opportunities for immigrants with effects ricocheting into Mexico's economy.

In times of depression or times of prosperity, baby boomers will remain central players in shaping the region. As baby boomers age, and look to the West for places of retirement, service enterprises aimed at their needs may well grow. If the Fur Boom took up the 1820s, and the Energy Boom characterized the 1970s, then the early 21st century may come, in regional history, to be known as the Assisted Living Boom.

## 7. Bust as the “Most Effective Growth Control”

In a widespread habit, people talking about booms and busts refer to booms as “good” economic times and busts as “bad” economic times. And yet people interested in encouraging the protection of open space and wildlife habitat, as well as people committed to the development of sustainable economies, argue that you can have too much of a “good” thing. Indeed, to some, the fundamental problem with the boom/bust cycle is that it thwarts thoughtful, sustainable development. To Westerners committed to the preservation of ecosystems, habitats, open space, recreation, and cohesive human communities, booms represent threat and injury, while busts present themselves as the only truly effective form of growth control.

Arriving at formal mechanisms for growth control—regulations and laws—challenges and strains the ingenuity and persuasiveness of public officials. If officials in state and local government have an aversion to growth management through effective regulations and laws, then a bust can provide the “enforcement power” that government will not exercise. Even though a bust is obviously a blunt and imprecise way to curb growth, the workshop discussion returned repeatedly to the desirable qualities of a bust. It puts the brakes on expansion that seems otherwise uncontrollable. It permits a period of reckoning and appraisal, and makes possible a chance to examine and reappraise hopes and goals. It can allow hardy organizations and communities to emerge in an even more vigorous and toughened condition, and it can cut back on enterprises that needed pruning anyway.

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### **Why a Bust Can be an Unfortunate Form of Growth Control**

*From Hardtimes in Paradise: Coos Bay Oregon, 1850-1986*

*by William G. Robbins*

The mill closures [in the late 1970s and early 1980s] ... affected the Community Action Center in both a negative and a positive way. The unemployment was “dramatic in the negative” because it increased the workload of staff members handling cases ... But growing deprivation and economic hardship was a boom to advocacy and organizing, because the action agency began to serve “people who understood that a willingness to work hard didn’t ... protect them from the system ....” [The bust meant] a loss of dignity to people who had labored hard most of their lives and are proud of their ability to support their families. “They’ve worked steady, paid their taxes, supported their community,” Jerry Lantto points out, “and all of a sudden it’s all gone, just down the tube.”