

LTD to roll on in spite of tax bus-t

By KEVIN HARDEN
Of the Emerald

Despite the defeat of the Lane Transit District's (LTD) income tax proposal by voters Tuesday, the bus service will continue as usual, at least until the LTD board of directors can decide on alternative ways to fund the system.

According to Rosemary Boss of the LTD, since the 2-1 margin defeat of a proposal that would have shifted the funding for LTD service from payroll taxes to income taxes

of those living within the service area, there has been little discussion about plans to fund future service.

The tax proposal went down to defeat in Tuesday's primary election 44,701 to 22,326, as did several other tax measures. But, says Boss members of the LTD board weren't surprised by the outcome.

"We'd sound real naive if we said we were surprised that the tax failed," Boss says. "Taxes have a way of failing. But we were pleased that the margin was as close as it was, as opposed to being defeated 5-1

or 6-1.

LTD board members will review several options they can follow to fund the service without the proposed tax until their June board meeting, Boss says.

Those options include the authority to levy a tax to continue the service without voter approval, Boss says, which is not likely.

Although LTD does receive operating grants from the state's general fund budget, Boss says money isn't enough to cover all the operating costs the system will face in the future.

The proposed LTD tax had been opposed by several Eugene businesses because they felt a payroll tax wasn't the proper way to support mass transit. The tax's defeat should be interpreted to mean there isn't public support for mass transit, they said.

Dave Rynerson, LTD planning director, disagreed.

"Tax measures do have a history of going down to defeat," he says. "You've got to realize that because people vote against a highway tax or a transit tax, that doesn't mean they don't want it."

Despite objections, sewage plant approved

By DINA MILES
Of the Emerald

Voters approved a \$29.5-million bond measure Tuesday for a modernized sewage treatment facility, in what may be a surprise move on a money measure.

But it was not nearly so surprising to members of the Metropolitan Wastewater Management Commission, which adopted the plan, when Lane County Commissioner Jerry Rust, changed his mind and objected to the project.

The plan calls for modernizing the existing Eugene treatment site, which will eventually serve the entire metropolitan area. Proponents of the plant say the Eugene and Springfield facilities are at near capacity, and a newer plant is needed to meet the sewage needs dictated by a growing population. The plan was designed to meet the 1983 federal and state clean water standards.

In passing the measure, voters agreed to finance the local share of the \$105-million facility. Federal funds will pick up the tab on

the remaining 75%. Voters within Eugene and Springfield approved the bonds by a vote of 22,749 to 14,011 Tuesday.

Areas within the metropolitan Eugene-Springfield boundaries and adjacent to the newly established Lane County Metropolitan Wastewater Service District (formed by the county commissioners), may petition for election to become part of the district.

With such decisive approval — a hefty 62 percent — members of the wastewater management commission believed voters made a rational, clear decision.

"I was honestly too close to the thing to make any kinds of predictions on it," said Bill Pye, manager of the commission.

"When the election results came in, I thought that the voters took the information before them and voted accordingly. It's not a victory; we think it's the kind of thing that says, 'We think you've thought it out well, and we think that the money will be best spent this way.'"

The measure hadn't received much organized opposition — in fact, both the

Eugene and Springfield City Councils as well as all three Lane County Commissioners supported the measure. It was unanimous until earlier this month when Rust spoke out against the project.

Rust was out of town following the election and was unavailable for comment on the outcome.

Rust had earlier claimed that the construction and the continuation of the plant would lead to unlimited growth in the area, posing problems for the quality of life here. A member of the wastewater management commission, Rust claimed the project was a "developer's dream" and a "nightmare for the taxpayer."

He also complained that the commission ignored major considerations in preparing the project in order to get the plan finished as soon as possible.

But Mark Westling, commission chair, pointed out that the plan was the result of seven years of combined effort among representatives from Eugene, Springfield and Lane County. The effort also included pub-

lic hearings to solicit citizen input. The plan met the approval of all government bodies as well as the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Environmental Quality.

Westling said the area has little choice but to meet the clean water requirement and that the plan has shown to be both environmentally sound and beneficial in a cost analysis. He also said the plan will further improve the Willamette River's water quality.

Contrary to Rust's charges, Westling said the commission addressed the growth question because the plan is based upon estimates for growth in 1990.

Pye said he couldn't guess whether the voters actually rejected Rust's arguments in approving the plan, but they probably felt the bonds would be used well, and that growth wasn't a big issue.

"I don't think that growth was possibly addressed to the extent that Mr. Rust may have thought it might have been. When he changed his mind, it was surprising to us."

Housing measure may provide 300 units

By KEVIN HARDEN
Of the Emerald

Lane County senior citizens living under a tight rent or housing squeeze will be able to breathe easier now that a ballot measure to provide more housing for the state's elderly has been passed.

The measure, which will provide nearly 15,000 rental housing units for the state's senior citizens, was approved by state voters in Tuesday's primary election by a 2-1 margin.

The measure could provide

Lane County senior citizens with up to 300 of those rental units, says state Rep. Gratten Kerans, D-Eugene, who worked for the measure's passage. But the exact number of units won't be decided until the state housing division can conduct a survey of the area's needs.

The housing units to be built will consist of mainly multi-family dwellings for elderly people now living in sub-standard dwellings. According to housing division figures, building the housing units could stimulate the state's

economy by providing more than 17,000 jobs and more than \$8 million in state and local property taxes.

Although the program will provide financing for private contractors to build the units, there are several options those contractors can follow, says Betty Niven, chair of the State Housing Council.

"From our point of view, this bonding provided by the measure will give us some innovative things that we haven't been able to do before," Niven says.

Those options could include small rental units, group care centers or even mobile home parks, she says.

No new bureaucracy will be needed to finance the projects, Niven says. All the money used for the units will be funneled from private lending institutions through the Housing Division and then to contractors.

Many contractors would rather build senior housing units than other projects, Niven says, which may make the process of funding

easier.

The housing units may not begin to be built for at least another year, Kerans says. But, after the funding process is started, the money could run out within the next two years.

"You just can't build 15,000 or 16,000 housing units over night," Kerans says. "But once this program gets rolling, the contractors could exhaust the money in two years."

If that happens, the state Legislature could pass a similar measure for more housing units for low-income senior citizens in the 1981 session, Kerans says.



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