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Eugene approves Civic Center bond, city budget fails

By KEVIN HARDEN
Of the Emerald

The third time may be the charm and after 15 years of planning, voting and disappointments, the Eugene Civic Center will become a reality.

In what was probably the largest voter turnout for a special election in recent years, nearly 30 percent of the registered voters overwhelmingly approved the civic center bond issue by a 3-2 margin.

The bond measure, passing by a vote of 10,473 to 6,848, may have been the only thing good about Tuesday's election. A city special tax levy on the same ballot was soundly defeated by area voters 9,700 to 6,770.

While the special tax levy would have provided Eugene's budget with \$6.4 million to operate city services for the coming year, the civic center bond will bring Eugene up to its cultural par, says the head of the Friends of the Civic Center Committee.

The new center to be built with the \$18.5 million bond approved by the voters will enhance Eugene's cultural aspects, with "room to spare," says Maurie Jacobs, head of the committee.

"Oh sure it will, with room to spare,"

Jacobs says. "We're also picking up the slack that we missed for the past 15 years."

The new center, which will include a multi-purpose concert, theater and auditorium facility, was first proposed nearly a year ago by the Eugene Civic Center Commission. That facility would also encompass a combined concert hall and large theater with seating for an audience of about 2,500.

A smaller theater with a 500-seat auditorium, underground parking, recital rooms and offices are also part of the project, which is expected to break ground sometime in January, 1979.

Although the center will cost the estimated \$18 million to build, the economic impact on the community as calculated by the Economics Research Associates could mean about 1,200 new construction-related jobs and nearly 200 more jobs once the center is completed.

It could also provide about \$40 million in increased revenue for the city before the project is completed.

Will the new center meet the needs of the community? Yes, Jacobs says.

"I can't talk for 25 or 30 years down the road, but for in the near future it will definitely serve the needs," he says.



Photo by Erich Boekeheide

Horse house

Horses seem to inspire the artist in just about everyone, but none more than one artistic McKenzie Highway resident. When she carves a horse in some pose, there's almost something mystical about it. See the story on Page 5.

State league opposes property tax limitation

By KEVIN HARDEN
Of the Emerald

A proposal to limit Oregon's property taxes may have been introduced to the state just a month ago, but one state organization made up its mind about such proposals several years ago.

According to Janet Calvert, president of the Central Lane County League of Women Voters, the State League made its decision on tax measures a long time ago when the group studied several tax proposals.

The league, a non-partisan political organization that claims at least 2,000 members statewide, took its stance on tax measures several years ago and has endorsed measures it felt would make the state's tax system equitable, Calvert says.

That includes property tax limitation measures, which, until recently, were just the angry grumblings of disgruntled property tax payers.

Those grumblings turned into action following the overwhelming victory of the controversial Proposition 13 in California's special election earlier this month.

Although no one really knows just what the effects of such a measure would be in Oregon, California residents found out their measure cut state revenue gathered

primarily from property taxes by several million dollars.

The California measure promised to open the door for increased business ex-



pansion because businesses would be paying less in property taxes compared with middle income families, whose property

taxes climbed sharply in the past few years.

But that may not be true, says Esther Loy, chairer of the League of Women Voters' state tax committee. The group is opposed to a property tax limitation in Oregon because it is not equitable, she says. Businesses would benefit more than the general public.

Because of the uneven property valuation between businesses and private homes, the shift in taxes would hit the middle income tax payer harder than the large corporations or industries, Loy says. That tax shift could make it harder on the private property tax payer than it has ever been.

"We support only tax measures that try to cover every segment of our society evenly," Calvert says. "That's one of our criticisms of this proposed tax limitation, that it hits the homeowners the hardest."

The group, while being supportive of tax measures that do the best to spread the revenue from taxes to those areas that need it most, thinks the shift in taxes from businesses to private homeowners will make the system of taxation in the state inequitable. That inequality will have to be remedied somehow, Loy says, and a higher tax on income may have to be initiated, Loy says.

"I cannot conceive how we'll get local tax

measures passed under that measure," she adds.

If the measure is approved by voters in November, Loy says it may take a court decision to clarify the two-thirds definition. Even then it may make it difficult for the state Legislature to pass new tax measures, she says.

"It will definitely take a court decision to clarify everything about this proposal," Loy says. "Whether this one thing can amend several sections of the state constitution is unclear."

The limitation, while purported to be a tax reform package, will probably also do a great deal of damage to the state's school system, Loy adds.

The schools now receive the biggest share of property tax revenue. If that revenue were cut off, she says, it could have disastrous results.

"What it will do with the school finance — it just worries me," Loy says.

Local municipalities could levy city or county income taxes, similar to the tax proposed by the Lane Transit District last month, that would be paid in addition to the regular state income tax to finance the school system, Loy says. But that isn't very likely, because that tax would also be subject to voter approval, she says.