



This is the image a group of University-area business owners have chosen to represent their new organization.

13th Avenue businesses form group for support

By HARRY ESTEVE
Of the Emerald

Taken separately, the shops that line East 13th Avenue next to campus are small, diversified and quiet. When at its peak, business is unspectacular.

But some of the store owners want to see that image changed, to one of unity and visibility.

"We all realized we had a lot in common," says Penny Merrill who, with her husband, owns the Oregon Art Supply at 720 E. 13th Ave.

So about six months ago, several shop owners met and formed the University Small Business Association. Merrill, who serves as vice president of the association, says their goal is to make the area "a celebrated niche of Eugene."

The chosen name for the niche: University West.

The impetus behind forming the association was encroachment by the University Bookstore, Merrill says. Several small merchants feared that the bookstore, which once dealt only in textbooks and school supplies, had grown too large and too all-purpose.

Because of its volume of sales, the bookstore always undersold the smaller businesses around it, Merrill says.

"They were selling things for less than it cost us to buy them."

So, members of the new association approached bookstore representatives and explained the problem. Merrill says the bookstore's response was "excellent."

"But we still need to get students to realize that the small businesses in this area really need their support," she says.

Now the association is working to improve not only the image, but the physical surroundings of the University business district as well. Merrill says parking and traffic problems scare potential shoppers away.

"Lots of people are scared to death to come here — bicycles are jetting out everywhere. We want to more clearly define the bicycle and pedestrian areas of 13th."

Although no specific plans for changes have been made, some ideas the association are considering include more covered bus stops and better access to the area by bus, Merrill says.

She says the Lane Transit District has said it is willing to make some improvements.

Other image-enhancing amenities discussed by the as-

sociation are stylish street corner signs and a "walker's guide" to the business area, Merrill says.

She says the association also is working with volunteers from the West University Neighborhood Association on increased crime prevention measures that include better street lighting.

Banding together as a group will help their visibility, Merrill claims, and it also will give them "a stronger voice in city government."

She says they will be using that voice soon when they ask the city to implement some of their ideas. Extra parking and bicycle route changes all have to be approved by the city.

The University Small Business Association currently has about 35 members, including the U.S. Bank and Sacred Heart Hospital. Meetings are held every Tuesday at 5:30 at The Loft above Aunt Lucy Devine's restaurant, 1340 Alder St.

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J-school meeting planned

An open house for the University's journalism school will be held Wednesday, Sept. 23 from 3 p.m. until 5 p.m. in Room 211, Allen Hall.

The purpose of the open house is to introduce new and returning students to the school's academic program.

On hand will be the new dean of the journalism school, Everett Davis.

For more information, call the school at 686-3738.



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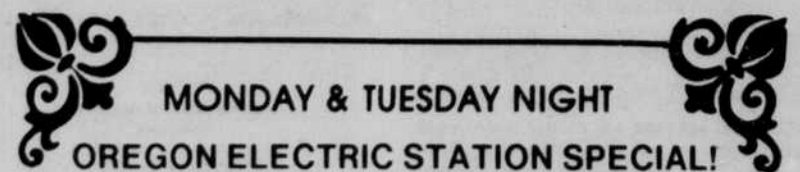
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