

Poll records involvement

Citizens happy with hearing process

By MARIAN GREEN
Of the Emerald

Ever wonder who shows up at the city council and other city government board meetings besides council and board members?

They generally are college educated, male, between 24 and 45 years old and proponents of whatever issue is up for discussion, according to a recent survey.

The City of Eugene's Citizen Involvement Committee questioned people who showed up at meetings of the planning commission, city council, city council

hearings panel and zoning appeals board and at all city land-use hearings.

According to the findings released last week, most persons answering the questionnaire were satisfied with the hearings process — 80 percent said they received adequate notification of the hearings, 98 percent said the hearings were held at a convenient hour (7:30 p.m. seemed to be the best time), and about 90 percent said citizens and decision-makers had enough time to discuss issues, Murdoch says.

Of the 438 persons who answered the questionnaire, 84

percent said they had attended college.

The majority of respondents (57 percent) were between the ages of 25 and 44, 26 percent were between 45 and 65 years and 9 percent were 65 and older. Two-thirds of the respondents were males.

About 70 percent of the respondents called themselves lay citizens, while 30 percent identified themselves as professionals involved in planning, real estate, land use or other allied professions. But regardless of their profession, 84 percent said they felt on equal footing with others at the hear-

ings, Murdoch says.

Half the respondents who said they had testified on an issue were proponents, while 39 percent stated they were opponents. Most proponents were applicants for various land-use permits and/or representatives. The opponents were adjoining property owners and affected neighbors.

"It does point up that most people have to be directly involved to be affected," Murdoch says.

The CIC is recommending the city send out more letters directly to citizens in addition to posting meeting notices on bulletin boards and sending letters to people who are directly affected, Murdoch says.

The nine-member advisory committee — comprised of one city council member, two planning commission members and six citizens — monitors citizen involvement in all phases of the land-use planning process and advises the Eugene City Council on these issues.

Respondents' suggestions include holding procedural briefings in advance of the hearings (this already occurs at

most meetings), allowing rebuttal time for opponents and using an overhead projector to display discussion materials.

City Council member Mark Lindberg said although the city's meetings "generally are conducted very well" for citizens who are highly educated and involved in the community, "the problem is that our citizen participation programs are not reaching a whole other strata of citizens of Eugene."

Lindberg suggested that the city and neighborhood organizations "bolster" their outreach efforts.

Another council member, Gretchen Miller, echoed Lindberg's concerns.

"It's beneficial to the community as a whole, in addition to input from those who are directly involved, to also get input from all kinds of citizens with all kinds of backgrounds," Miller says.

"Doing it for a few years, I know it's time consuming and exhausting to become involved in an issue and follow it through," she says.

"That's a lot to ask of people."

Student kidnapped after class

A University woman was kidnapped as she left a Gerlinger Hall physical education class Tuesday, according to Eugene police.

The student was taken to a Eugene residence, where she managed to escape and walk back to the University, according to Sgt. Rick Allison of the Eugene Police Department.

Allison said a white male in his

late 20s grabbed the arm of the victim at about 9:30 p.m. as she left her class. He then forced her across campus, Allison said.

The woman was pushed into the man's car and driven to a house. Although the man tried to keep her at the house, she resisted him and escaped through an unlocked door, Allison said.

Due to fright and confusion,

the woman walked across town and did not return to campus until early Wednesday morning, he said.

The woman described the kidnapper as a white male of slender build with dark brown, medium-length hair.

The Eugene police currently are checking leads in the case, Allison said.



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Depression grips mills

PORTLAND (AP) — The roar of chain saws in the woods and the whine of trees being sliced into boards in Oregon sawmills are the sounds of money in this timber-rich state.

But the forests and mills are quiet this fall.

The timber industry — by far the largest industry in Oregon — is suffering through its worst period since the Great Depression of the 1930s. And those who know say things are going to get worse.

The problem, all the experts agree, is the extremely high interest rates that have dried up loans for housing. More than one-third of the lumber and plywood produced in the Pacific Northwest goes for housing. Oregon and Washington produce half of the nation's plywood and one-third of its lumber.

"We've had recessions in the past. We're getting into the throes of a depression," said N.E. Bjorkland, executive vice-president of the Industrial Forestry Association — which represents about 100 timber companies.

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