

The lull before the storm

By Ron Hunt
Of the Emerald

Tuesday afternoon, on the freeway near Salem, a television cameraman was photographing a state worker tending to a freeway divider. Why wasn't the cameraman at the Capitol?

The special session of the Legislature, less than a week away, has great implications for the future of the state — and he's filming a highway worker.

The atmosphere at the Capitol — surrounded by a maze of one-way streets (political town, you know) — is calm.

Denny Miles, the one who controls the flow of information from the governor's office, welcomes distractions. He spends 40 minutes with two reporters — something he won't have time to do after Monday — with the press clamoring for his attention.

He answers questions matter-of-factly and in time with drumming fingers.

Miles' speech is peppered with homey phrases. The impact on small businesses of the governor's proposal to speed up collection of employee withholding taxes is "a small hiccup" compared to the damage of a corporate excise tax.

Two floors up in the Senate wing, the Legislative Research office awaits the activity of next week. Catalogs, with reports on "Pet Food Tax," "Solid Waste Fuels for Automobiles" and "Fires Caused By Collisions With High Rear-

End (High-jacker) Vehicles," wait for the curious.

The rest of the town is just as slow. Chez Robert, a showy French restaurant frequented by legislators, has maybe eight customers.

Monday morning, the freeway near Salem will be clogged with cars driven by journalists and legislators going to the special session.

Will the cameraman be on the freeway or in the capitol?

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Crash

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and escape across the ice coating the river.

Coast Guard and Park Police helicopters were sent to the scene to drop lines with lifesaving rings to survivors in the river. One survivor grasped a rescue ring, but then fell back into the freezing water, and was pulled to shore by divers.

Rescue boats were at the scene, too, but the ice impeded their work. The airport was closed, with incoming flights diverted to Dulles International Airport in Virginia.

The crash occurred little more than a mile from the White House.

The government had shut down its offices in midafternoon because of the snow that blanketed the city.

"One of our people who saw the accident said he saw the plane nick the south side of the bridge, skip over it and go into the Potomac River on the north side of the bridge," said David Hess of the FAA.

The Boeing 737 is a short-range twin-engine jet.

On New Year's Day, the FAA said that the nation's major airlines had logged 26 consecutive months without a fatal accident. The last fatal crash involving a major carrier occurred on Oct. 31, 1979 when a Western Airline DC10 crashed in Mexico City.

There had not been a fatal airliner crash at National Airport since 1949, when an Eastern Air Lines DC4 collided with a military plane. Fifty-one people were killed.

The crash also was the first fatal accident involving a commercial airliner since President Reagan fired 11,500 air traffic controllers for an illegal strike last August.

Clarification II

Due to a typesetting error, a clarification in Wednesday's Emerald was inaccurate.

The clarification reported that Lane County Commissioner Scott Lieuallen agrees with commissioner Jerry Rust that businesses and the Eugene Chamber of Commerce are to blame for the county's economic ills. Lieuallen *does not* agree with Rust's conclusion.

staff

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