



Photo by David Corey

About 350 people turned out to hear the latest predictions on Lane County's ability to attract new industry at Wednesday's Lane Economic Forum.

Lane could lure industry, but attitudes must change

By Marian Green
Of the Emerald

Lane County has its work cut out for diversifying the area's economy, consulting representatives told citizens attending the United Lane Forum Wednesday night.

Two representatives of Fantus Co., Jim Bruce and Jim Lothian, delivered a detailed audit and an industry screening report for Lane County.

The studies were funded by the Lane Economic Foundation, a non-profit corporation organized to promote economic development.

Audit results indicate that Lane County's economy has suffered significantly because of limited manufacturing growth in the economy, Bruce said.

"Had the growth of production kept pace with the growth of county jobs, the county would have had about \$150 million in additional wages paid in 1982," he said.

The audit also identifies the pluses and minuses of 13 locational factors, that Bruce said are "very much on track with those industry uses to determine whether to relocate."

The pluses included relatively high wages with low inflation rates, good labor-management relations, stable entry-level and

semi-skilled workforce, high quality of life, adequate support services, relatively cheap transportation, adequate utility capacity and positive educational facilities, he said.

"LCC and the University of Oregon are excellent educational assets," Bruce said. However, he said the two campuses could be brought into closer contact with the industrial sector through seminars and programs.

Bruce also told the nearly 350 audience members that although Lane County's high livability is nice, it's "not a panacea for other efforts that must be made to promote economic development."

"It's not a high priority. It's a medium priority."

On the minus side, the county lacks enough suitable industrial sites, a firm tax structure and needs to develop county and state attitudes conducive to attracting industries, Bruce said.

The "climate of uncertainty" as far as taxation "leads to a hesitancy of industry to make a large commitment to an area, he said.

Moreover, attitudes toward development by groups, such as environmentalists, at the state and county levels have hindered industrial expansion, he said.

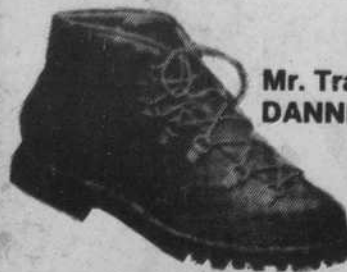
"It doesn't take many incidents like that to scare industry away."

Lothian identified 16 possible industries that would be suited for Lane County, based on criteria, such as location, possible expansion, labor compatibility and environmental concerns.

Fantus Co. classified the 16 industries into five categories for which it will develop marketing programs. The categories are pharmaceuticals and fine chemicals, machinery, electronics, instrumentation and research and development industry.

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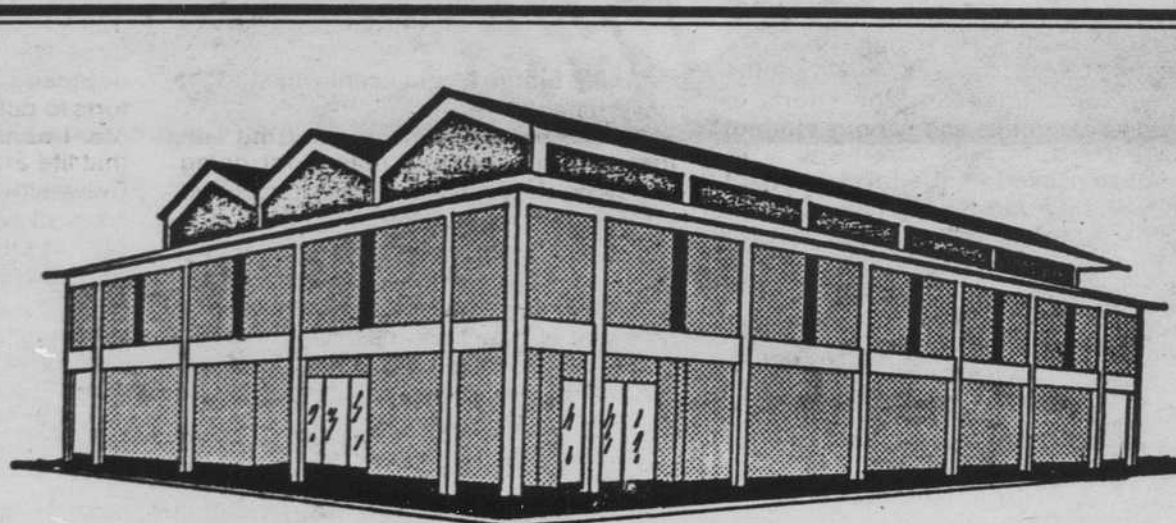
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