

Sales tax steps closer to vote

By Michele Matassa
Of the Emerald

The Lane County Board of Commissioners referred a 4 percent sales tax proposal to voters Wednesday, bringing the property tax relief plan one step closer to a spring election.

The board's action follows a state Legislature mandate that a majority of the state's local governments request an election on the sales tax before the election can occur.

With Lane County's referral, 17 of 19 required counties have requested the election.

The five commissioners, voting 4-1 on the issue, seemed willing to let voters "stomp" on the proposal in order to move it out of the way and start work on another solution to the state's unreasonably high property taxes.

"If I were betting on the thing, I would not bet on passage of the sales tax. But the thing has to be dealt with before we can get on to other things," said Commissioner Scott Lieuallen, who voted in favor of referral.

Commissioners Bill Rogers and Chair Gerry Rust also urged referral of the measure because "it needs to be dealt with," while Commissioner Chuck Ivey supported the action without much comment.

The board's only "no" vote came from board Vice-Chair Peter Defazio, who said he generally favors letting the voters decide, but doesn't want to spend money on an election destined to fail. County staff said the election will cost about \$500,000.

"I have the privilege to vote my conscience and that is to vote against referral," Defazio said.

The board's decision came after almost two hours of public hearing and discussion. Before testimony began, Rogers, who chairs the board's legislative subcommittee, said "if we refer this (sales tax vote), it is not an actual endorsement of the measure itself." Rather, referral supports voter participation, Rogers said.

While discussing referral, the board expressed dissatisfaction with the state Legislature's handling of the property tax issue. The Legislature's failure to come up with a popular solution and its placing the decision in the hands of local government dismayed most of the commissioners.

"What I'd like to do is refer this thing back to the Legislature. They dropped it in our laps. We ought to drop it back into theirs," Ivey said.

Lieuallen and Rogers also said the Legislature should have dealt with property tax relief without involving local governments.

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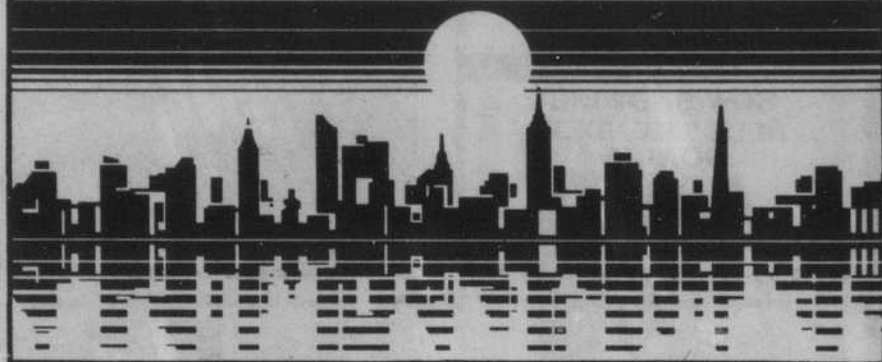
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Ethnic, women's theater takes to stage

Two weekends of ethnic and Women's theater, presented by the Ethnic Studies program at the University, will be featured in the EMU Forum Room beginning Friday at 8 p.m.

Under the direction of Bob Manning, the plays will be presented as part of a new University course called "Productions in Ethnic Theater." The objective of the class is to study playwrights and cultural plays, and then present the plays to the community for free.

Each night of the first weekend, the class will stage two one-act productions on Black and

Chicano theater. The first play, "The Dutchman," is a black theater piece written by LeRoi Jones, the father of Black revolutionary theater.

It tells the story of a young black man who lives in a predominantly white society. His plight is illustrated by a deadly game of murder on a ghostly subway.

The cast includes James Britt, Gary Gatewood, Katherine

Petersen, Roxanne Doyle, Kimberleigh Durham, LaLita Lockett, Willene Long, Renee Platt and Lisa Meyers.

The second play to be performed is "No Saco Nada de la Escuela," ("I don't get nothing out of school,") written by Luiz Valdes, the founder of El Teatro Campesino, a theater group formed in California, which won the Obie Award in 1968.

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