

Oregon Daily Emerald

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A tug for track

As part of the renovation of Hayward Field, administrators take their turn at moving the east grandstand almost 36 feet in 1½ hours Sunday. From front to back are Chancellor of Higher Education Bud Davis, University President Paul Olum, Vice President for Administration Dan Williams and Athletic Director Bill Byrne.

Photo by Maria Corvallis

Official's role as developer sparks debate

Bill to stem conflict of interest
introduced in state Legislature

By Jolayne Houtz
Of the Emerald

Questions about a Eugene city councilor's involvement with a controversial city ordinance change has raised some eyebrows throughout the city and has spawned a bill in the state Legislature.

The bill, which would take the decision about declaring a conflict of interest out of the hands of a public official, stems directly from a controversy about Eugene's con-



Rob Bennett

dominium conversion ordinance and City Councilor Rob Bennett's role as a proponent of the issue.

Bennett, elected last November, was instrumental in revising the city's condominium conversion ordinance as a Eugene Planning Commission member. The revisions would have eliminated some protections for apartment residents to make it easier for developers to convert their buildings into condominiums.

Bennett also owns The Eugene Manor, one of three high-rise apartment buildings in Eugene that would have been affected by the ordinance changes.

While a city attorney ruled the conflict of interest law was not violated because Bennett was not presently planning to convert his buildings, Bennett abstained from voting on the issue.

But some people, including state Sen. Larry Hill, D-Springfield, believe the issue centers on the appearance of a conflict of interest and violation of the public trust.

"There's no reason to think Rob Bennett conducted business in any illegal way," Hill said. "But it does

Turn to Conflict, Page 4

Court finds no conflict in appointment

By Carolyn Lamberson
Of the Emerald

The ASUO Constitution Court decided Friday the ASUO Executive's appointment of Katy Howard to the ASUO Student Health Insurance Committee involves no conflict of interest.

Howard is also a member of the Incidental Fee Committee. According to Section 4.2 of the ASUO Constitution, no student may hold elected and appointed positions simultaneously unless the court rules that no conflict of interest exists.

The court handed down its opinion a week after a public hearing on the matter.

The opinion, written by Constitution Court Chairman Andy Clark, focused on whether Howard's appointment to the insurance committee will result in an IFC member carrying out a function reserved for a member of the executive branch. It concluded this will not occur and that separation of power has been maintained.

"The committees exist independent of one

another; the responsibilities and decisions of one will not, in normal circumstances, influence those of the other. Therefore, there does not seem to be any direct conflict of interest," the opinion read.

The opinion said the ASUO Executive could conceivably coerce favorable decisions from insurance committee members by threatening to remove them, but the court didn't find evidence that this was the Executive's intention.

"This lack of control is critical, and leaves the insurance committee as an independent body free of governmental parentage," even though the committee is composed wholly of Executive appointees, it read.

IFC member Ron Munion attended the public hearings and disagrees with the court's decision.

He expressed concern that the court was looking at conflict of interest from the wrong angle. He thinks the insurance committee is essentially a separate branch of student government, adding it is questionable for Howard to be in two branches simultaneously.

Governor has until March 31 to make a decision

State told to conduct exercises or lose funds

By Scott Maben
Of the Emerald

Oregon has until the end of the month to reschedule mock nuclear attack exercises before more than a million dollars in federal civil defense funding is withdrawn from state and local governments.

According to a March 3 letter to Gov. Neil Goldschmidt, an official for The Federal Emergency Management Agency warned that more than \$1.15 million in federal management funds promised to the state for this year would be withheld unless drills Goldschmidt cancelled Feb. 23 are rescheduled and carried out.

Tagged as "communications drills" by FEMA, the exercises are designed to test preparedness of state and 10 local jurisdictions in Oregon under the premise that 48 nuclear warheads have exploded in the Northwest. The agency asks all states to participate in the tests periodically, although some refuse.

FEMA Regional Director William Mayer of Bothell, Wash., told Goldschmidt in the letter that failure to conduct the drills by June 30 in designated Oregon communities, including Lane County, would constitute a "serious breach" of the state's contract with FEMA.

However, Goldschmidt's legal counsel, Cory Streisinger, said FEMA has no legal grounds to retain the funds, and Oregon has the legal right to refuse.

Each year FEMA negotiates with every state to decide which emergency planning activities will be performed in exchange for the federal funding, according to Phil Cogan, regional public affairs officer for FEMA.

"This activity was one of those that Oregon previously agreed to. We agreed to provide funds if this and other activities were performed. It's that simple," Cogan said.

Losing the funding will not affect

federal disaster recovery assistance or the Emergency Food and Shelter program, a FEMA news release stated. About half of the funds are to finance emergency planning in 20 Oregon counties and three of the state's major metropolitan areas.

FEMA has budgeted to give Lane County nearly \$32,000 this year.

The exercises for Oregon, similar to ones conducted in 1982, depict 10 western Oregon targets, including three bridges over the Columbia River, the Bonneville Dam in the Columbia River Gorge, the state capitol in Salem and a military base in Klamath Falls.

No civilian participation is required for the drills, Cogan said.

In Oregon, officials in Deschutes, Clatsop and Coos counties had already refused to participate when Goldschmidt cancelled the tests, and other county administrations were considering refusing.

Goldschmidt aides released a statement Feb. 24 that explained the governor's reasons for cancelling the drills.

"FEMA's scenario defies common sense and is unacceptable to Oregonians," the statement read. "Our citizens do not want the state to participate in an exercise that may actually threaten world peace by advancing the notion that a nuclear war is survivable."

Goldschmidt opposed the drills in a letter to Mayer, saying, "The nuclear attack scenario giving rise to this exercise was developed without any participation by, or consultation with, officials of this state."

In his reply, Mayer disagreed, citing meetings and exchanges of correspondence and draft plans between Oregon officials and FEMA since last May.

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