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said. Six years ago there were two empty dorm halls because of low student enrollment at the University. One year later, in 1983, one dorm, or 80 beds, sat vacant, according to Ramey.

Ramey speculated the student perception that on-campus housing is hard to come by may be forcing many to look off-campus for housing. And in a rental market already near saturation, that can aggravate the problem.

Because neither the federal government nor the University currently is building new housing in Eugene, the ball has fallen directly into the court of Eugene landowners and developers to alleviate the housing shortage, said Pat Decker of the Eugene Planning Department.

But Eugene city planners got a "bleak response" at a recent meeting with banks and homebuilders, in regard to new multi-unit housing starts, Decker said.

Citing the high cost of construction, interest rates and

property taxes, developers said they will not build new multi-unit housing in Eugene until rental rates increase substantially, she said.

In the last two years only two multi-unit complexes have been built in Eugene, according to Molly Cox-Cheshire of the Eugene Building Safety Department.

But the 154 apartments involved are part of the Willamette Oaks Retirement Center and do nothing to alleviate current student housing problems, she said.

Granted, there is a 59 single-unit apartment complex being built by a private corporation on 18th Avenue and Alder Street, but it may be the exception rather than the rule, she said.

Since 1980, 472 rental apartments in 20 buildings have been constructed in Eugene at a cost of \$9.9 million.

All total, there were 61,000 rental and residential housing units in Eugene in April 1987, according to a Eugene housing vacancy survey conducted by the Federal Home Loan Bank.



Graphic by Lorraine Rath

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which in effect has been "subsidizing the rental housing industry," passed the 1986 Tax Reform, she said. Before the Tax Reform, landlords who lost money on rental housing could write off their losses against other earned income.

Once the law passed, however, many professional people, such as physicians and attorneys, who had acquired rental property in Eugene, exclusively as "tax breaks," discovered the new \$25,000-a-year maximum deduction didn't cover their losses, she said.

On the advice of organizations such as the National Apartment Association and the National Association of Home Builders, local landlords felt

justified raising rents 25 to 30 percent, she said.

Stogsdill, a professional consultant specializing in the rental industry, believes many Eugene landlords have gone overboard on rent increases, she said.

In addition, those who own the rental property and are jacking up rent prices, have the law firmly on their side — Oregon state law prohibits local rent control.

Oregon Statute 91.225 states "...that the imposition of general restrictions on housing rents will disrupt an orderly housing market, increase deferred maintenance of existing housing stock, lead to abandonment of existing rental units and create a property tax shift from rental-owned to owner-occupied housing."

The statute, passed in 1985 as an emergency measure by the Oregon Legislature, may have been a conscious move by rental-property owners and other business people, anticipating the economic upsw-

ing in Oregon and recognizing the state's comparatively low rental-housing rates.

The statute was lobbied heavily by groups such as the Oregon State Home Builders Association, Oregon Bankers Association, Affiliated Rental Housing Association and the Oregon League of Financial Institutions, according to Oregon legislative records.

Protection for increasing rental prices now seems to be moving into the national records. The Reagan budget draft for the next fiscal year calls for a new policy that would prevent cities with rent control from receiving these "rental rehabilitation funds."

The federal government currently distributes \$200 million a year to cities to help repair rental property and bring it up to local building codes.

More than 200 cities nationwide have some form of rent control including New York, Boston, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles and San Francisco.

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Correction
Al Lavine of Lane County Mental Health, was misidentified as holding a doctorate degree in Tuesday's Oregon Daily Emerald article on the county's new psychiatric hospital. Lavine is working toward a doctorate degree through the University's clinical psychiatric department.
A photo in Thursday's Emerald misidentified Christine Taylor as Andy Curtis.

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