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City seeks volunteers to work on ballot statement

By Aaron Knox
Emerald Editor

The City of Eugene is seeking volunteers to serve on a committee that will draft a neutral explanation of the ballot measure to create a recreation/natural resource zoning district for its voters' pamphlet for the Nov. 8 general election.

Applications were distributed during the Riverfront Research Park Commission's monthly meeting Wednesday afternoon by Cathy Briner, the city's project representative.

The measure, which would amend the city charter if approved, is aimed primarily at the research park project, where proponents hope to zone about 35 acres of the existing site plan to prevent development.

A petition is already being circulated to designate that area under the new zone, Briner said.

If approved, the rezoning could be applied to any land within city limits upon receipt of 7,000 petition signatures.

Mayor Brian Obie will select four people for the five-member committee, but a city ordinance requires the proponents be two of the chief petitioners of the measure.

The ballot measure is sponsored by Citizens for Responsible Land Use, and the group lists three members — Dan Stotter, Catherine Larsen and Thomas Lester, all of Eugene — as chief petitioners.

Opponents of the measure need to state under oath that they oppose the proposed charter amendment.

The four members selected by Obie will

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OSPIRG says car dealers don't promote safety bags

By Douglas Fuchs
Emerald Contributor

Most automobile dealerships in Oregon are ignoring important safety features when explaining options available in new cars, according to a report presented Tuesday by the Oregon State Public Interest Research Group (OSPIRG).

The report, titled "Selling Safety Short: Auto Dealers Undersell Air Bags," recommends that auto manufacturers and dealers stop disregarding safety features and make an increased commitment to equip and actively market all automobiles with air bags.

An air bag, or vehicle crash cushion as it is technically called, is designed to inflate in the event of a front-end collision of 12 mph or more, protecting front seat

passengers from slamming into the windshield or steering wheel.

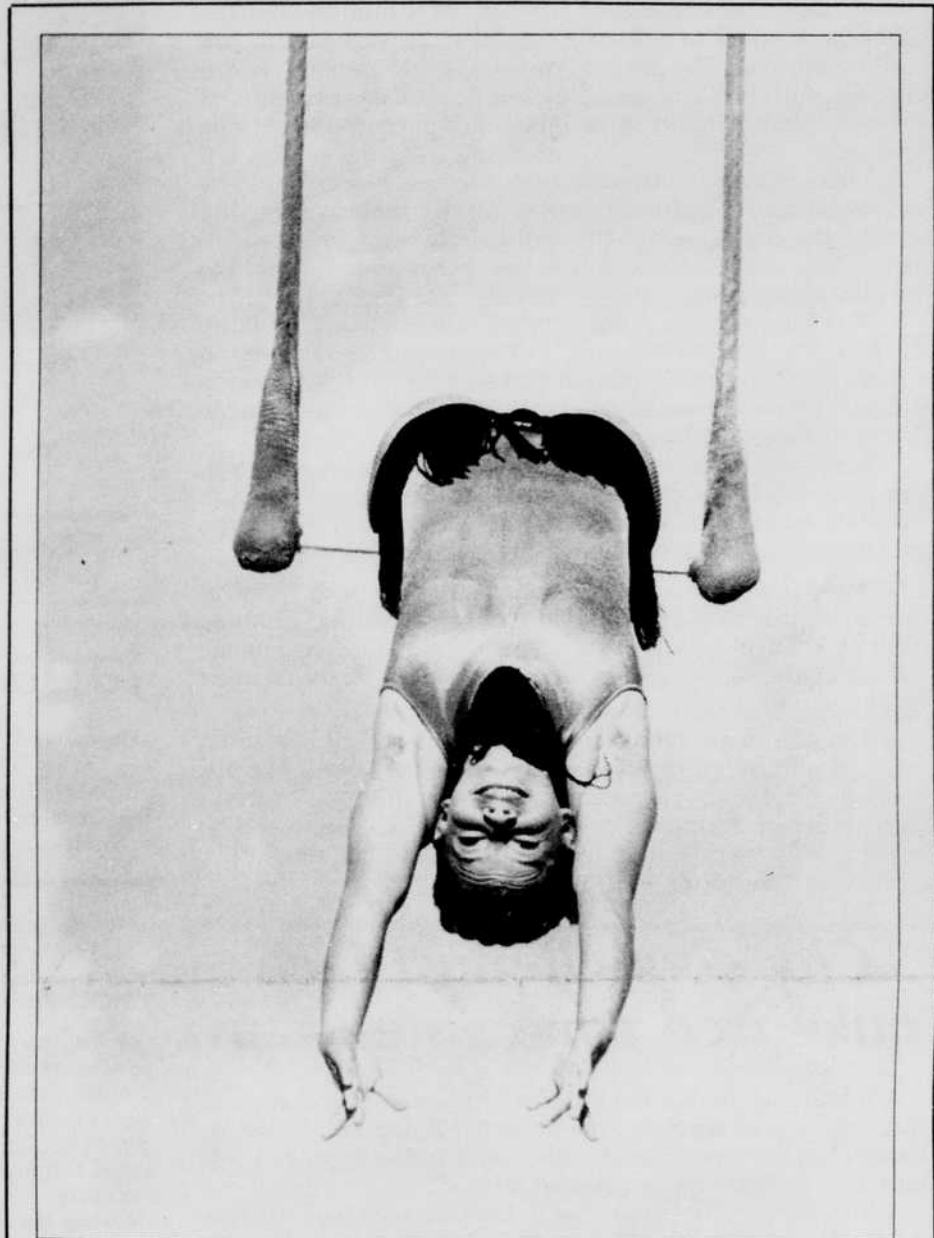
Joel Ario, OSPIRG executive director, said at a news conference Tuesday that the report is the result of a two-month survey of 34 automobile dealerships across the state.

Ario said that air bags are the most effective safety device ever designed, and that automobile dealerships do very little to market them.

"More than 62 percent of the automobile dealers were either completely indifferent or actively hostile to the air bag option," Ario said. "Oregon dealers should stop selling safety short."

Jon Stubenvoll, co-author of the report, said that customers have a right to gather all necessary information when deciding

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Flying Pickle

Rebecca Perez of San Francisco's Pickle Family Circus dazzled audiences at Eugene's Amazon Park on Wednesday. The circus was in town for three shows.

Photo by Scott Maben

Project Safe Run stretches legs to Los Angeles



Photo by Ginny Sliman

Rigger, a doberman pinscher, may look vicious, but he has never had to bite anybody to protect Project Safe Run founder Shelley Reeher.

By Kelvin Wee
Emerald Managing Editor

Shelley Reeher believes women should not have to worry about being assaulted if they choose to run, walk or hike — at any time of the day.

So in 1981, Reeher started Project Safe Run, an organization that offers women well-trained dogs to take with them on runs, walks or hikes to serve as deterrents against assaults.

In 1988, Project Safe Run has logged more than 6,000 runs without a single case of assault. Its success has led to nationwide praise for the Eugene-based nonprofit service, which plans to open a Los Angeles chapter in October.

Reeher's cause is a personal one. She was attacked by four men in an incident unrelated to running more than 10 years ago.

"It took me three years before I could tell anyone I was attacked," Reeher said. "It was like a nightmare, but I am not a rape victim. If I were a victim, I would be dead."

"I'm angry at the violence, but I am not angry with men or women," said the 32-year old. "I am doing something more than complaining. I decided to take destructive anger and put it to constructive use."

Reeher said the Los Angeles chapter will open up a whole new avenue for women there, as the home office in Lane County has, because it will offer women an alternative to running alone or not running at all.

When she visited Los Angeles earlier this year, Reeher met many women who told her they had given up running because there was just too much harassment there.

"Society protects women but we don't teach them how to survive," she said. "Women have to put power back into their hands and say 'It's my responsibility to take self-defense classes and to learn how to survive in this world.'"

When Project Safe Run began in 1981, Reeher had only one dog. Today, the program boasts seven runners, or dog escorts. The dogs serve as a visual deterrent but are not dangerous unless provoked.

Despite its attempts at providing an alternative to women, the program's road to success has been paved with some sharp pebbles.

Many people lashed out at first, labelling the dogs as attack dogs. In the more than 6,000 runs made with Reeher's dogs, not a single dog bite has occurred.

"They are not attack dogs," Reeher said. "If you don't bother the dogs and you don't bother me, there's no problem."

She said society has been lured into thinking of working dogs as attack dogs by the media and film makers who attempt to make the fast buck by producing low-cost movies on terrorist dogs.

"These movies spurred on idiot owners to guard meth labs with poorly bred dogs," she said. "Those are the people who should not have the dogs to begin

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