

Let groundbreaking on park begin soon

It's been a five-year odyssey for the Riverfront Research Park, and it's still a long way from shore. But there is good news: Work finally may start on it this summer.

A land use board's decision last week cleared the way for ground breaking on the park project to begin next summer. The park, when completed, is expected to provide 4,000 new jobs and be the centerpiece of state, commercial and University research and development efforts.

But the proposed location of the park, alongside the south bank of the Willamette River, has long been a sore spot with citizens concerned about the site's riverfront ecology and recreational use history. Opponents of the research park generally (with one important exception) say they are not against the park itself — which is expected to provide a much-needed infusion of capital investment and economic growth for this region — just where it is located.

And despite the setback from the land use board, research park opponents have vowed to take their battle to the state Court of Appeals.

Park opponents do have valid concerns, but their unwillingness to compromise has delayed the riverfront project for too long. The state and University park's designers have considered the land's special needs, and their designs reflect attention to those needs.

The proposed master plan of the park would retain the soccer field and Silva Orchard, two popular features of the south bank as it stands now. Also, 30 to 40 percent of the site, including riverbank areas, would be preserved as public open spaces.

The important exception alluded to earlier is the matter of what the research park will be used for. Opponents of the park are against it being used for military research. That is a commendable objection.

But on all other scores, critics of a riverfront research park have never been able to offer a more preferable site. The truth is that the Willamette site is the best available one. A close proximity to the University is necessary for the park, and land around here is quickly becoming scarce, as the ongoing Sacred Heart General Hospital/West University Neighborhood fracas bears out.

Because the location is ideal, and because the Riverfront Research Park's designers have satisfied the area's ecology and recreational use concerns, groundbreaking should begin.



Trojan punishment, fine don't fit crime

Last Monday, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission slapped Portland General Electric Co. with a \$280,000 fine for safety violations at the Trojan nuclear power plant.

Apparently, the power plant had several problems that could have developed into a serious mishap, somewhere on the scale of Three Mile Island. Screens designed to filter the cooling system were missing from the reactor's emergency core cooling system.

We are told that, on its own, the missing screens would not lead to a reactor core meltdown. But they would have prevented the emergency system from halting a runaway nuclear reaction.

In other words, if something went wrong inside the reactor, uncontrollable amounts of radioactive material would have been released, and large sections of the surrounding area would glow in the dark.

PGE's fine just is not enough. To a huge corporation such as PGE, \$280,000 is a drop in the bucket. Raise the electricity rates a fraction of a percentage, and the fine is paid for, with plenty of money in reserve for the next time a commission comes snooping.

This was not the first punishment for PGE. In January of this year, it was socked for \$75,000 for security procedure violations. Obviously, a stronger message needs to be sent to PGE. Hitting it in the pocketbook (or more importantly, the stockholder's pocketbooks) is not working.

Last week's news will fan the flames of anti-nuclear protest. Nuclear power, especially in an environmentally aware state like Oregon, is a highly volatile issue. Nuclear plants are dangerous, expensive, unclean and generally unacceptable by the public. Nobody wants a potential disaster on their doorstep.

While the fine is not enough in our estimation, it might be the proverbial straw that breaks Trojan's back. Already, PGE is facing a possible initiative on the November 1990 ballot to close the plant. Monday, the anti-Trojan ranks received many new followers.

PGE needs to clean up its act. If PGE continues to run Trojan as they have in the past, it's only a matter of time before the unthinkable happens. If you play with nuclear fire, there is a strong possibility you'll get burned.

Letters

Cash flow

This letter is in response to the rumor floating around that Sacred Heart General Hospital is going to lease space in their new parking structure to the McDonald's Corporation.

This is irony to the point of pain. For not only does McDonald's food promote heart disease and other ailments, the company is contributing to the rising problem of solid waste issues as well as the reduction of the world's rain forests where their "All-American Beef" is raised.

The irony is that a hospital whose duty is to heal the sick as well as prevent illness, is going to put a signature of approval on poor health and short-sighted ecological awareness.

It seems to us that the only reason for this action is one simple word: money. For example, Sahalie's, a small neighborhood health food store, whose purpose was to promote good health, was pushed out by a rent hike by the hospital. Whereas the

McDonald's Corporation, backed by millions of dollars, will have no problem paying rent.

So this leads to the question: Is Sacred Heart really in the business of promoting good health, or are they just trying to promote cash flow? It is evident that Sacred Heart needs to get their priorities straight.

In closing, if anyone is interested in demonstrating against this, there is a meeting on Monday, Oct. 25 in the Survival Center office, located in the EMU Suite 1.

Andy Pearson
Brendan Relaford
Students

Bilking

Last week, I saw a program on 60 Minutes about a manufacturer that was bilking the government. The company was supposed to supply a vital component for the Defense Department's new HARM missile, but all the components supplied were shoddy.

This last week, I have seen

articles reporting that a group of environmentalists have brought a lawsuit seeking to prevent the launch of the space shuttle that is carrying the plutonium-powered Galileo probe. They are afraid another explosion like the Challenger will release radioactive particles.

These examples serve to illustrate the two reasons I feel make it difficult and expensive for the United States to make scientific and technical progress today.

On the one hand, there are manufacturers who don't give a damn if they produce a decent product as long as their cash flow is unimpaired. We've had this problem for centuries; you'd think we would know how to deal with it by now.

On the other hand, there are environmentalists who feel they must ban anything that poses the slightest risk of ecological damage, no matter how meritorious. They are a problem of more recent origin, but I feel that they are the more insidious of the two because they can argue from a viewpoint of righteousness. They are actually proud of what they are doing.

ing. This planet has a limited amount of resources with which we can build a future. Are we going to let these two groups of people fritter away our best efforts?

David Nott
Student

Worthy cause

In response to Logan Dhonau's letter (ODE, Oct. 9):

I also witnessed a Project Safe Run demonstration, and was so impressed I urged the freshman honor societies Phi Eta Sigma and Alpha Lambda Delta to donate \$100 to them

last spring. The members of these honoraries immediately agreed to help support this worthy cause as they have helped many others, including the Greenhill Humane Society, Students with Disabilities, Land County Blood Drive, Carper House and the Eugene Mission.

My involvement with these groups makes me proud to inform you that they have already risen to your challenge. Furthermore, I am certain we can expect to see continued successes from them both philanthropically and academically.

Megan Rassmussen
Alpha Lambda Delta

Letters Policy

The Emerald will attempt to print all letters containing comments on topics of interest to the University community. Comments must be factually accurate and refrain from personal attacks on the character of others.

Letters to the editor must be limited to no more than 250 words, legible, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is submitted.