

Construction of Riverfront Research Park continues

By Demian McLean
Emerald Reporter

It's not much to look at. At the north end of Agate Street, across Franklin Boulevard, sits an empty steel frame of a three-story building. Its walls and windows are missing, and the barren soil around it is scarred with bulldozer tracks.

But for some, this skeleton is the beginning of what will flesh into a new identity for the University and the city of Eugene.

"Eugene is moving away

from a timber-based economy," said Diane Wiley, the University project manager of the Riverfront Research Park.

"The idea is to draw private industry to Eugene and the University," she said. "With the Research Park we hope to establish a knowledge base to local industry."

After seven years of litigation and financial haggling, construction on the first building of the Riverfront Research Park is under way.

The new building, which began construction last June, will

open to its first tenants in February of 1993.

The 60,000-square-foot complex will house a computer software company, the University's Technology Transfer Office and its Advanced Science and Technology Institute.

Also part of summer construction were new bike paths connecting the 67-acre site to surrounding areas. One path runs between the Eugene Millrace and the Urban Farm, connecting the north side of Agate Street to Gallery Street.

The other path is slated for

completion in November. It also runs next to the millrace, but heads east, connecting Agate Street to Garden Way.

According to the master plan, construction of the Research Park will advance in phases over the next 20 years based on demand.

R.A. "Gus" Keller, chair of the Riverfront Research Park Commission and former mayor of Eugene, expects demand for space at the park to grow once the first building is complete.

"After we got started on the first building, we've seen more

people interested, just because there's actually something to see," Keller said.

As it grows, the park has the potential to become a significant source of income for the University. Under a 50-year ground lease, Institutional Development Associates, the park's private developer, will pay the University 10 percent of the property's appraised value annually.

After the first six years, the University will earn \$60,000 a year.

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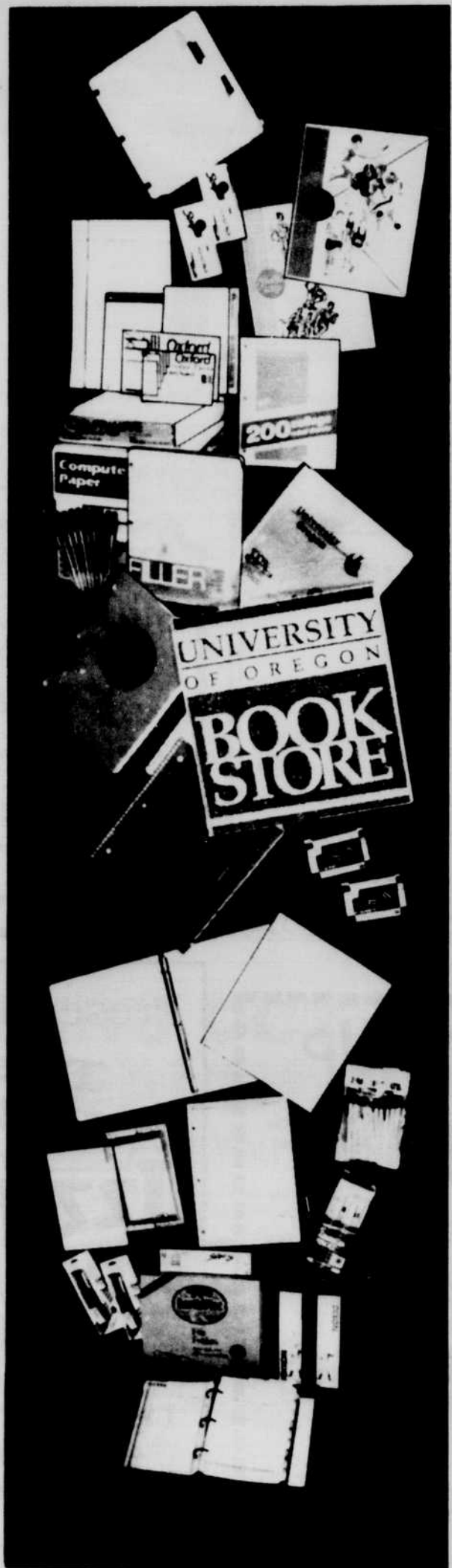
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