

## Legislature women will focus panel on issues

Gov. Barbara Roberts and four prominent Oregon legislators will come together in Eugene today as members of a forum panel at the Eugene Conference Center.

The forum, titled "Women and the 1993 Oregon Legislature: What's Next?" is scheduled to start at 7 p.m.

"This event will give women the opportunity to learn about issues affecting our lives and give them a chance to act and be heard," said Rep. Cynthia Wooten, who is co-sponsoring the event with the University Center for the Study of Women.

Margaret Hallock, the director of the University Labor and Research Center, will be the moderator for the event.

Panel members will include Sen. Tricia Smith, Sen. Catherine Webber, Rep. Avel Gordly, Wooten and Roberts.

Each panel member will speak for 10 minutes and then the floor will be opened for questions and discussion.

Some issues that will be discussed are: health care, abortion rights, family planning, adult and family services, higher education budget cuts and proposed tax plans.

## Key player



Johnny Hahn of Seattle sets up his 64 key Acoustic Melodipro in front of the University Bookstore Monday.  
Photo by Anthony Farney

## Museum's focus is Oregon rivers

By Rebecca Merritt  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Ten years ago, Dave Rodriguez wanted to make sure the history and evolution of the McKenzie River were properly documented.

Now, as president of the Oregon Rivers Museum, Rodriguez is about four years away from achieving his goal of providing Springfield with a 60,000 square foot interpretive center that will focus on the history and diversity of Oregon's natural waterways.

"History needs to be preserved," Rodriguez said. "History is being taken for granted and getting lost."

For the past two years, Rodriguez has been working with volunteers and a nine-member board of directors to establish a master plan for the Oregon Rivers Museum. The Oregon Rivers Museum is a non-profit organization that consists of about 60 members, Rodriguez said.

The proposed museum, which is to be constructed along the McKenzie River, will educate its visitors on the biological and recreational values of water. Rodriguez said the center is environmentally concerned about Oregon's waterways, but the purpose of the museum will be to educate and not to lobby for river legislation.

"We are not political," Rodriguez said. "This is to let people understand the importance of the waterways."

The main attraction of the proposed museum, Rodriguez said, will be a Streamarium exhibit. The Streamarium, a replica of an actual stream environment, will be housed in the museum's 16,000 square foot Natural Sciences Wing. A long, meandering freshwater aqueduct directly from the McKenzie River and will feature various fish species and other aquatic life.

Another key exhibit at the Oregon Rivers Museum will be the evolution of the McKenzie drift boat, to be located in the Historical and Cultural Wing. Rodriguez said the museum has acquired and preserved the original boats.

Oregon Rivers Museum is attempting to establish an educational programming advisory committee comprised of area school officials and teachers. Rodriguez said he has already received the cooperation of University President Myles Brand.

"I think perhaps one of the most important aspects in this project is to give credit to a very important and rich part of our heritage that hasn't been taken seriously," Scott Myers, an Oregon Rivers Museum volunteer and University student, said.

According to a preliminary market demand assessment and an economic impact summary prepared for the Oregon Rivers Museum, the proposed center will attract between 200,000 and 350,000 visitors annually, bringing between \$2.8 million and \$5.2 million a year to the local economy. Education programs at the museum are expected to attract 17,000 students participating in field trips.

Rodriguez said the main obstacle standing in the way of the museum's completion is funding. The organization has raised \$160,000 so far through grants received from the City of Springfield, Oregon Economic Development and House Bill 3401. It hopes to receive an additional \$30,000 grant from Lane County.

Oregon Rivers Museum needs to raise \$40,000 before it can present its master plan. Rodriguez said he hopes the presentation of the plan will attract large contributors. So far, he said, people have been unwilling to donate money because they are unsure of what to expect.

The master plan should be presented this year and construction will probably begin in three years, Rodriguez said. The definite site of the project is still unknown, but the Weyerhaeuser Company has donated the organization 75 acres of land along the McKenzie River, northeast of McKenzie Highway and 42nd Street in Springfield. The organization is also considering sites in Springfield's Gateway area.

"We've still got our work ahead of us," Rodriguez said. "There's a definite snowball effect that we're trying to position ourselves in."

## Bill may give developers tax break

By Katy Moeller  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Things are tough all over. Just ask Floyd Garland, a land developer in Burns, Oregon. Garland testified last week before the Senate Revenue and School Finance Committee that under the current system of property tax assessment, it is not economically possible to be a land developer in his rural community.

"I debated whether or not the county should own this land and not me," said Garland.

In 1978, Garland filed a plan for Burns. It consisted of 103 acres and a total of 52 lots. Garland says he has sold only 14 plots since 1978, or roughly one lot per year.

"Twenty years ago I thought this was a good investment," he said.

But sluggish sales are only the beginning of Garland's problems.

In 1992, the Oregon Supreme Court ruled that the "developer's discount factor" was unconstitutional.

The developer's discount factor provided subdividers with tax relief by assessing their property at a lower value.

Shortly after the Oregon Supreme Court decided that the discount factor was unconstitutional, the Harney County Assessor sent Garland a new assessment.

Garland said his taxes increased from \$32,000 to \$285,560.

"Needless to say, that got my attention," Garland said.

He appealed to the Board of Equalization. In his appeal he cited several specific factors: market conditions, population decline, the local economy, housing starts, environmental and utility problems.

The BOE reduced the assessment of his property to \$136,210.

In response to the equalization board's decision, the Harney County Assessor appealed to the Oregon Department of Revenue.

Garland said he attended a hearing with the Department of Revenue during November 1992, and a decision is still pending.

Garland was successful in lobbying Senate Republican Leader Timms, who is now sponsoring SB 896.

The proposed bill would authorize special assessment of certain undeveloped residential sites.

Sen. Timms said in Tuesday's hearing that SB 896 would promote economic development in rural Oregon.

But many assessors are opposed to the bill and are fighting it every step of the way.

Jerry Hanson, who is a representative of the Association of Assessors, testified in a hearing before the Senate Revenue and School Finance Committee last Friday. He stated in no uncertain terms that SB 896 was not needed.

"What most assessors would feel is unnecessary is legislation to require a certain mechanical technique to evaluate property," Hanson said.

"I think it's a valid tool in some cases, but it can easily be abused if you had to use it in every subdivision," he said.

Joe Hayes, the mayor of Burns, isn't particularly worried that if SB 896 isn't passed, a barrier to development will be created.

"There have been a number of developments here over the years, but nothing's going to change until we get something in here to create jobs," he said.

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