

Sorenson advocates education

■ **ELECTION:** Candidate wants communication to increase between University and county government

By Jennifer Schmitt
Community Editor

A candidate for Lane County Commissioner said he wants to focus on increasing support for education, improving the environment and working to make government open and fair.

Peter Sorenson is running for the position of Lane County Commissioner in the district currently represented by Commissioner Jerry Rust. This district includes South Eugene and the University.

Sorenson, who earned three degrees at the University, said public officials need to play a more active role in defending Oregon public education.

"Public education is being attacked in Oregon both at the higher education level and the elementary and high school levels," Sorenson said. "I think a commissioner needs to have an active advocacy role for the University."

As a senator, Sorenson organized a group of alumni and local businessmen to testify in Salem to get more funding for the University.

"I found it odd that there wasn't more support from the city of-

ficials," Sorenson said. "If it's only the University officials testifying for more assistance and funds, it doesn't make the same impact as it would if other public officials and residents spoke up, too."



SORENSEN

Sorenson also would like to see closer ties between the University and county government. "The University is the largest single employer in the county," he said. "There are a lot of ways the county and the University can work together. I would like to encourage University officials to testify at the meetings to increase communications."

One example of how the University has worked in conjunction with the community is the way the Oregon Department of Transportation has been working with the School of Architecture and Allied Arts to get information on possible road designs and layouts, Sorenson said.

Besides focusing on defending education, Sorenson also wants to work on protecting the local environment.

"Environment is a big area for me. In fact, my undergraduate

and graduate work was in geography," Sorenson said. "There are thousands of acres of land that the Board of Commissioners is in charge of and I want to make sure we protect our environment."

Sorenson wants to bring the Short Mountain Landfill, which was recently fined for not meeting federal standards, into compliance with federal regulations and also wants to decrease the amount of air pollution in the area by reducing the amount of wood-stove smoke and field burning.

Providing a fair and open government is the third issue Sorenson supports. In order to increase the openness of government, he wants to make sure the meetings are announced in advance and that meetings are held at different times so they will be more accessible to the public.

"Not everyone holds bankers' hours," he said. "I want to make sure the meetings are available and also that the meetings are held in strict observance of the public meetings laws."

Peter Sorenson and Peter Bartel are the two candidates for Lane County Commissioner. They were the two candidates out of five with the highest votes in the primary election last May.

Editor's note: A profile of candidate Peter Bartel will appear in tomorrow's paper.

Youth have power to improve world, says YES!

■ **PRESENTATION:** Environmental group discusses stories of young people who stayed true to their beliefs and made a difference

By Tom Potter
Student Activities Reporter

The youth of the world can make a difference.

That was the message given at a Youth for Environmental Sanity! (YES!) presentation at the University Saturday night. YES! spoke to about 15 attendees in Gerlinger Lounge about the state of the environment and the role teens and young adults can play in changing the current problems of the world.

"With one simple action we can send out ripple effects," YES! co-founder Ocean Robbins said. "We can be wheels for transformation. I'm the solution, and so are you."

The presentation began with a slide show demonstrating what would happen if the earth didn't have any air, water or land. The show was a multimedia presentation using music, pictures of nature and commentary by Robbins and co-presenter Michele Bissonette to give the audience a sense of the world's environmental problems.

The presentation included a round-table discussion of how the slide show impacted the people watching. Robbins and Bissonette then shared success stories about other youths who have made a difference by acting on what they believed in.

"Youth are the greatest untapped resource we have in this country," Bissonette said.

The presenters also said people shouldn't focus

on the bad things they do that hurt the environment. Instead, people should concentrate on the good things they do.

"I could create a long list of things I do that are bad for the environment, but I could create a longer list of the things that I do that are good for it," Robbins said.

Speakers also talked about the danger of cutting down the world's rain forests and how much of a role cattle ranching has in that destruction.

Robbins recommended people make changes in their diets. A change in the amount of meat people eat would discourage the destruction of rain forests to create land on which to raise and feed cattle for the world's meat market, he said.

Robbins and Bissonette also spoke about how they became involved in YES!, and provided information about what others in the audience could do to make a change.

"It's important for us [youth] not to underestimate ourselves," Robbins said.

Robbins said he hopes to send out a message of hope, inspiration, education and empowerment.

YES! tours all over the world to educate young people about what they can do to help the environmental movement. The organization also holds summer camps for youth that focus on the human community, working together and conflict resolution.

"The more I've traveled, the more I've been angered, awed and inspired by the people working for change," Bissonette said.



Andrew Brackensick/Emerald
A plume of fire rises above a Eugene firefighter on Friday as he protects an EWEB building with a steady stream of water.

Gas fire ignites at EWEB during valve replacement

■ **BLAZE:** Nearby child-care center and EWEB credit union were evacuated

By Christian Hill and Doug Irving
Community Reporters

Flames hissed out of a ruptured gas valve Friday as fire fighters sprayed down the steaming building fifteen feet behind the blaze.

A traffic sign near the fire was warped and blackened by the heat, and yellow police ribbons cut across the streets within a block of the fire.

The fire was caused when gas ignited during a "routine" valve replacement outside the Eugene Water and Electric Board building on 4th Avenue underneath the Ferry Street Bridge, said Steve Nelson, a spokesman for Northwest Natural Gas.

"We had a controlled situation there that just got out of control," said Albert Metheny, one of three workers injured in the blaze. The workers were treated for minor burns at Sacred Heart Hospital and released.

The exact cause of the gas fire was still under investigation late Sunday night, Nelson said. There will be a technical review meeting later this week, he said.

Child care workers evacuated

"We had a controlled situation there that just got out of control."

— Albert Metheny
Worker injured in blaze

28 children from the child care center inside the nearby building that houses the center and the EWEB credit union, said John Mitchell, the EWEB communication coordinator.

"When I arrived I didn't see any ambulances or anything, so I thought everything was fine," said parent Ed Alverson, with his 14-month-old daughter in his arms.

Other businesses in the area were warned of the fire, although they were not forced to evacuate.

Three fire units were dispatched to the scene, along with three medical units, said District Fire Chief Paul Dammen. Nine officers contained the blaze from about 2:00 p.m. until the fire was put out around 5:50 p.m., he said.

"We're trained for this sort of thing," said Captain Ivan Mombert. "There was no real danger."

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