

THE STATE OF THE CITY

Inducted councilors pledge respect

By Jennifer Schmitt
Community Editor

The best way to build community is to build trust, and the best way to build trust is to get to know one another, said Eugene City Councilor Tim Laue in his welcoming speech Monday.

Jim Torrey was inaugurated as the 25th Eugene mayor and five City Council members, including Ward 3 representative Bobby Lee, were sworn into office during the State of the City address and inauguration ceremony at the Eugene Conference center.

Councilor Lee said he was extremely nervous during the swearing-in ceremony and at the end of his oath he repeated, "Help me, God."

Twenty-eight-year-old Lee said he wants to repay the city of Eugene for all of the miracles it has given to him.

"It is actually a miracle that I am here today," he said. "The odds are that a person like me from my background should not be here. I shouldn't have even had the opportunity for a college education."

Lee said when his father and a local West University businessman were 18, they had escaped from communist North Korea and come to America.

"If my father hadn't left and started over here in the United States I probably would have been a corn farmer," Councilor Lee said. "I just want to give back to this community."

As a new city councilor, Scott Meisner said he wants to create and deliver good government.

"We are not here by accident," Councilor Meisner said. "We are here because the people have chosen us to represent them. This does not come without high expectations."

Not only will the new city council be more accessible to the public but the members will also be more respectful toward each other, said Councilor Pat Farr.

"I am not proud of the constant bickering on City Council last year," Councilor Farr said. "Someone once said you cannot disagree without hostility. I think you can disagree and still be respectful."

City: Housing, parks seen as important

Continued from Page 1
shortfall resulting from Measure 47.

"If I could select the things we could do in the next four years, I would choose not to have to deal with Measure 47," he said. "But Measure 47 is here and we will have to deal with it."

Although more than two-thirds of the Eugene population voted against Ballot Measure 47, it was passed in November.

"It is the law of the state, and as such we must adhere to it," Torrey said.

Torrey said one of the goals of his term in office is to meet the changes the community wants while staying within the resource limits of Measure 47.

In order to do this, Torrey is compiling a priority list of core services and services that can be eliminated.

Councilor Tim Laue and members of city staff have developed a Measure 47 process which will be presented to the Eugene City Council on Wednesday.

One component of the process includes preparing a baseline budget. The budget must take into account the estimated \$10 million revenue shortfall expected as a result of Measure 47.

"On July 1, you will have a balanced budget that fits the demands of Measure 47," Torrey said.

The second component is to look five years into the future in an attempt to forecast needs of the city which may not have been included on past budgets.

"By looking five years out we can avoid making hasty decisions which may negatively impact this community," Torrey said.

The third component is recognizing the priorities listed in a recent city survey. According to the survey, public safety was listed as the number one priority with the impact of roads as number two.

Torrey encouraged public involvement and said citizens should make their service needs known.

"If there is a service you want, it is your responsibility to make an effort and let us know," Torrey said.

Another way Torrey said he wants to offset the loss of money caused by Measure 47 is by working with the Springfield mayor and the Lane County Commissioner to integrate some of the current services provided by Eugene.

Torrey said he is ready to "do away with any rivalry that in fact reduces the effectiveness of the tax dollars."

This integrated approach has been used



AMANDA ERICKSON/Emerald

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— Jim Torrey
Eugene Mayor

Mayor Jim Torrey gives his State-of-the-City address at the Eugene Conference Center

in the past with services such as the regional 911 emergency response system and the metropolitan waste water management system.

While Measure 47 is a major challenge, the mayor outlined five areas he plans to address in the next three years.

These areas include growth management, public safety, affordable housing, park and open space acquisition and a new library system.

Growth management must balance the creation of new industries and jobs with the need to protect the environment, Torrey said.

In the area of public safety, Torrey said there have been significant improvements such as the new public safety station in the West University area. But he also said there is more to be done in the area of community policing such as hiring more patrol officers and support staff.

Affordable housing is one of the most immediate human needs in the community, Torrey said. Torrey proposed organiz-

ing a city committee which will look at all the possible aspects of housing in Eugene.

"Young people and first-time buyers are unable to find housing they can afford," he said. "We are rapidly pricing ourselves out of the market."

In the last 20 years there have been no significant park land purchases. Torrey proposed groups involved in both construction and park acquisition meet to integrate the goals of both sides.

"We are running out of the opportunity to protect our own land," he said. "We can't wait 1,000 days to see progress in this area."

The final area Torrey hopes to improve is the library system.

"The library system we have is inadequate and I will be very upset if we cannot find a solution to the problem in the next few years," he said. "Whether it be a change to branch libraries, storefront libraries or a fleet of bookmobiles, something needs to be done."

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