

Rail: Legislature has no planned funding

■ Continued from Page 1A

The High Speed Rail plan proposes having high-tech trains make eight trips a day from Eugene to Portland. The current rail system only includes one round trip from Eugene to Portland daily.

The City Club of Eugene recently conducted a study, "The Cascadia High Speed Rail Project: Should Eugene-Springfield Get on Board," to evaluate the needs and effects of high speed rail. The City Club is a group of community members who work to educate the public on state and city issues.

"[Committee] response has been overwhelmingly positive," Briner said. "Going into the project most of the committee members were dispassionate about the whole issue, but everyone is really enthusiastic about this plan now."

According to the study, the high speed rail project would cut current travel time to Portland by train from two-and-a-half hours to one hour and 45 minutes. A trip from Eugene to Seattle would be cut by almost three hours.

Implementing the rail project could cut travel costs of gasoline and parking for students and business people traveling along the corridor.

"It is only \$24 round trip to Portland," said Wiltz. "I can't even park in Portland for that much."

The study also addressed many of the concerns regarding the project.

One of the biggest concerns was funding for the project in light of Measure 47 cuts. Committee members said investing in the project actually would save money by lessening future costs in road repair and construction.

"It is not a matter of either this or that but a compensation plan of investment for long-term needs," said George Kloeppel, study committee member. "Investment is needed in the years to come. If the opportunity to meet expanding transportation needs passes, it will be lost for a long time."

Another way to fund the project is through government subsidies. According to the study, the Cascadia Corridor has been federally designated as a potential high speed rail corridor and has qualified for federal financial assistance.

"All forms of transportation enjoy subsidies," said Gil Mallorey, Chief Executive Officer for Amtrak West. "Rail is part of a balanced transportation system. Anyone who lives in the state

should have an interest in mobility."

How to get to different places within a city once the train passenger gets there was also a concern. Committee members recommended a plan that would include taxi vouchers or bus passes with the train ticket.

A plan to construct a high speed rail connecting Eugene to the rest of the Cascade Corridor has been proposed to the state legislature, Briner said.

Governor Kitzhaber's transportation budget includes a small subsidy for the rail system, but City Club members said the proposed funds are not enough to fund the train sets needed to start the system.

According to the City Club rail study, the Republican budget does not include any funding for the rail project and actually takes away funding from the current train, "Cascadia," that makes one trip daily along the corridor.

"As of June, we won't even have the train we have now," Briner said. "Not only are we not getting needed funding, it is being cut."

Approximately 125 Eugene City Club members have voted to endorse the project and are currently lobbying the state legislature for project funding.

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Music Today Fest continues this week

The last two performances of the Music Today Festival are happening today and Wednesday. The festival celebrates 20th-century music, sponsored by the music school and other local arts organizations.

Today, members of the Oregon Composers Forum will perform. On Wednesday, Confluence, the Uni-

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versity faculty jazz trio, will perform original jazz pieces.

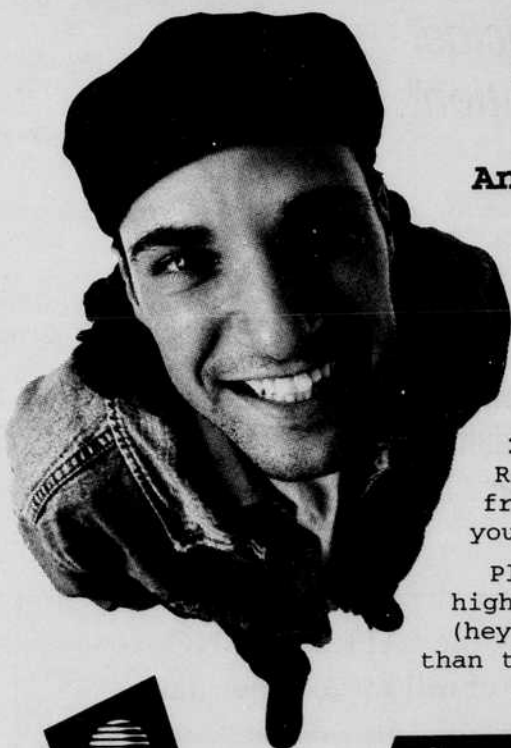
Both concerts begin at 8 p.m. in Beall Concert Hall.

UO Museum of Art seeks volunteers

The University of Oregon Museum of Art is currently seeking volunteers. These volunteers will be responsible for sharing knowledge about art with touring groups.

Applications are now available and are due May 2. For more information, call Sue Stone at 342-3531 or Laura Aaron Sear at 346-0966.

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