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Protest

continued from page 1

"In this kind of dispute, we need to make sure we support the workers and that the community stands up and supports them," said Pete Sorensen, Lane County Commissioner.

State Sen. Tony Corcoran, D-Cottage Grove, read a statement of support for the newspaper employees on behalf of seven state legislators from Lane County, and a spokesperson for U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio also presented a statement supporting the guild. The crowd also included employees not in the guild — distribution workers — who tried to unionize in the past.

Sixty distribution workers began organizing a union at The Register-Guard last year. Teamsters Union 206 representative Stefan Ostrach said more than 60 percent of distribution employees signed up before Register-Guard management stepped in with unfair labor practices.

"They fired a woman, held captive-audience meetings, solicited grievances directly and gave big raises. That killed it, right there," he said.

The National Labor Relations Board ruled recently that The Register-Guard had committed pervasive and unfair labor practices against the distributors during the union organizing.

People in the crowd chanted along with organizers at the rally, saying

"Zinser, go home," a reference to a Tennessee lawyer hired by the newspaper to bargain with employees. Pressmen, who print the paper at The Register-Guard, have been negotiating with the owners since their contract expired on March 31st.

Demonstrators lifted white signs with protest messages into the air. Various union representatives held banners or flags aloft, including Head Start workers, the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and the UAW National Writers Union. Writers Union member Sally Sheklow spoke in support of the newspaper employees' contract demands.

"We support writers being paid a living wage for what they do," she said.

Highway

continued from page 1

ODOT plans for new roads through the Oregon Transportation Plan, which considers long-term transportation issues and new road construction.

"Projects are based on local communities' recommendations

and sources for funding," said John Jackley, ODOT public affairs manager, adding that ODOT funnels projects through a priority process known as S.T.I.P. before they can be started.

This approach doesn't always work and is the reason why multiple bills on transportation are being introduced at the legislative level, Kropf said.

"ODOT is a huge bureaucracy, and they have the mindset to do whatever they think is right," he said. "But they are not getting the job done."

He estimates the project will require two sessions to implement because a cost analysis will need to be completed before the project can be started.

Tolls could be one way to finance the project.

"Other states have used tolls," Jackley said. "To date, they have not been used by Oregon to pay for road projects."

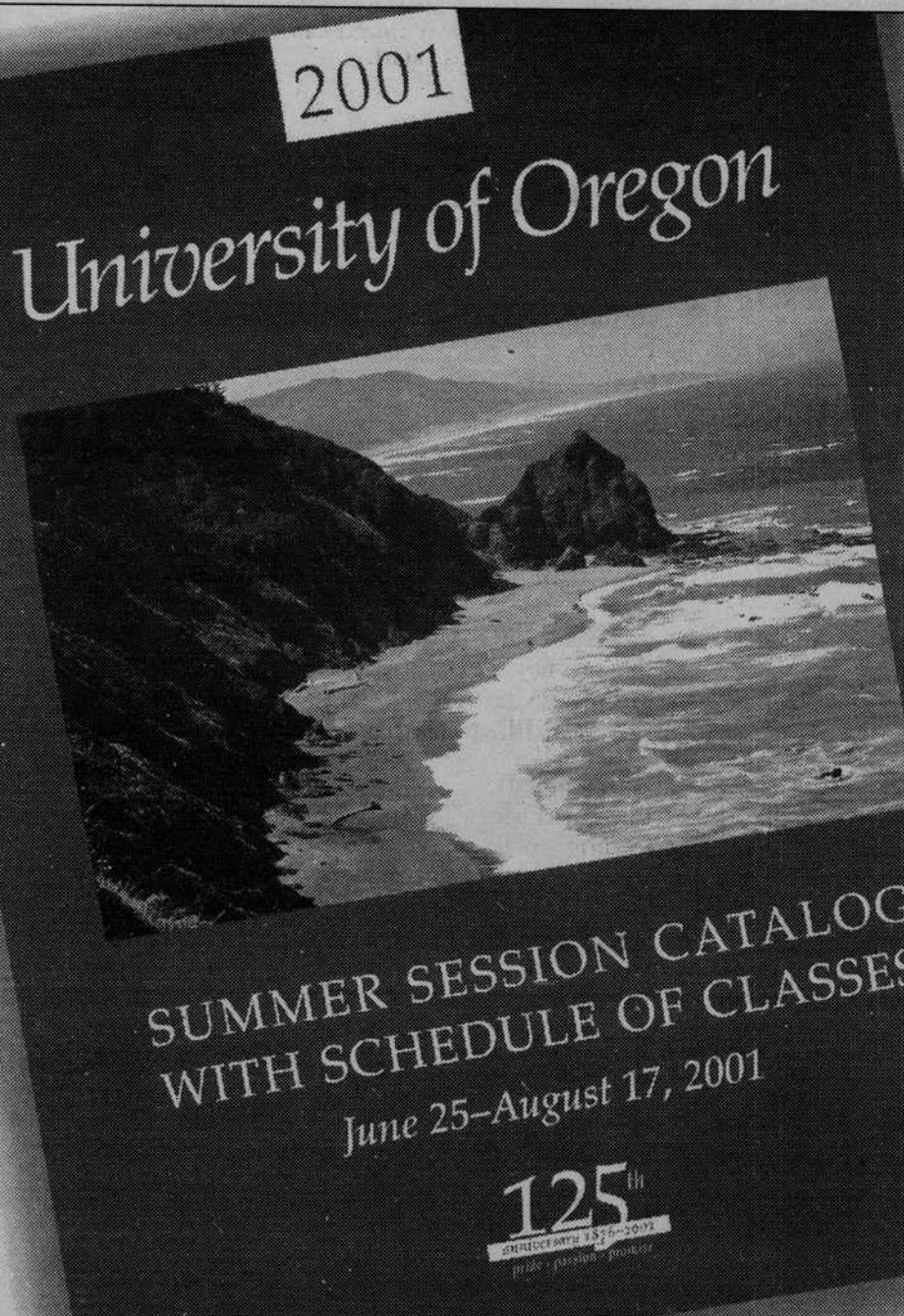
Jackley said HB 3195 would have a huge fiscal impact on the state, in part because the roads would cross a number of small creeks as well as the McKenzie and Santiam rivers. "We would have to construct more bridges," he said. "You're talking around \$400 million for the cost of that bill, with no sources identified to pay for it."

Kropf explained Oregon needs to become more innovative and creative in its solutions — including financing. He suggested the legislature keep extra construction lanes in place when the current expansion project between Albany and Salem wraps up.

"Since the [federal government is] paying for it, they require we rip those extra lanes out of there when we finish — unless the legislature mandates they remain," Kropf said. "That's millions of dollars to take that base rock out, when we could use it."

Other states have opted to pay for expansions with pavement leasing, which requires the contractor to build a project for the state and maintain the pavement for a set number of years.

The committee has scheduled a public hearing on the bill for May 2 at the Capitol building in Salem.



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