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News brief

Public to give input on cell tower placement

A public hearing will be held at 7 p.m. tonight at Harris Hall, 125 E. Eighth Ave., to give the community a chance to comment on new ordinances for cell phone tower placement.

The hearing is a follow-up to a community meeting held last month.

The Lane County Planning Commission is developing new ordinances for the placement of cell phone towers for the county. Several companies are attempting to site more towers in the Eugene area; one possible site is close to the University at

East 15th Avenue and Villard Street.

Civic officials will be at the hearing, as will representatives from the group Citizens for Responsible Placement of Cell Phone Towers. County Commissioners will make a final decision on the ordinances in early January. For more information, call 682-3734.

— Brook Reinhard

Negotiations

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search, some departments are in a position where they can do that. My basic message (in the negotiations) is that this is a cooperative effort."

Brian Wolf, lead negotiator for the GTFF, said the University would have to consider a significant wage increase if it wanted to make up the ground lost in recent years. Since 1983, real wage salaries for GTFFs have declined by 13 percent, he said.

"There's been no talk of a minimum or strike, per se, but we do

want something more than inflation," Wolf said.

But administrators could be faced with a difficult choice during the negotiation process. With a predicted state budget shortfall of \$290 million, administrators at all of Oregon's state-funded universities are being forced to look at their operating costs, and Overbeck said that the GTFF is concerned about what that means for GTFF salaries.

However, state Sen. Tony Corcoran, D-Cottage Grove, who spoke at a GTFF press conference Thursday, threw his support behind the

union's request for higher pay.

"Public universities in Oregon would be cutting their own throats to look at any reduction of GTFFs," Corcoran said. "We will be watching in Salem as we go through these budget cuts. We'll see who is taken care of and who is not."

The GTFF is also seeking inclusion of "training grant" graduate employees in collective bargaining agreements and a stronger anti-harassment policy in its new contract.

Leon Tovey is a higher education reporter for the Oregon Daily Emerald. He can be reached at leontovey@dailyemerald.com.

Decorations

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over" of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, he said.

Hawkins said businesses are realizing how crucial this holiday season is, with all of the potential gift-buying for Hanukkah, Christmas and Kwanzaa.

"The percent of sales that a lot of retail stores do between Halloween and Christmas tends to be around 40 to 60 percent of annual sales," Hawkins said. "How nervous companies must be. ... We haven't experienced this kind of an economy since the '40s."

The trick, Hawkins said, is for companies to figure out how to promote early enough to win consumers' attention, but not so early they turn people away.

"There's a real motivation to capture the buyers early before someone else does," Hawkins said.

Meier & Frank visual director Vikki Henry said it doesn't matter when a company decorates for the holidays, as long as it's before Thanksgiving.

"There aren't any fringe benefits to getting stuff up early," Henry said.

Though Henry said she was 25 percent done setting up the store's seasonal decorations on Nov. 2, she

said she's not starting early to increase holiday spending.

The reason for the promptness, Henry said, is to make sure everything is ready for the day after Thanksgiving, the busiest shopping day of the year.

"Regular business still goes on," Henry said. In addition to her decorating duties, Henry said she must maintain the various sale displays throughout the store. She said she's giving herself plenty of time to be ready for Nov. 23.

Customers have complained about the early decorations, Henry said, but there's a reason.

"People just don't realize that this has to be done so we're prepared for the day after Thanksgiving. It's not something that can be done quickly. This is a humongous store."

Henry said she wouldn't personally want to start thinking about Christmas until after Thanksgiving. She promised that Christmas music wouldn't play in her store until then.

In the past few years, J.C. Penney men's department manager Dean Martin said he received complaints for the store's "early" decorations. This year, he said he hasn't heard a single complaint, which he called a "good sign."

University senior Tim Hove said it seems ludicrous to put holiday decorations up in October, but he said it's not that big of a deal.

"If stores want to put up stuff early — let them do it," Hove said. "I think there are people who do complain, but lots who don't even notice. Some just say 'Gee, that's early this year' and move on."

Like Hove said, not everybody complains. Some people, such as University freshman Amalia Lucas, enjoy the hype.

"I think it's kind of nice to extend the Christmas season," Lucas said. "It feels nice."

University junior journalism major and J.C. Penney Sales Associate Kristi Henderson said she was surprised to hear Santa Claus would be coming to town before Thanksgiving.

"The season tends to be a few weeks earlier every year," Henderson said.

Holiday visuals may be springing up at area department stores, but seasonal music is a rarity. Other than the Christmas Corner shop in Valley River Center, most stores haven't yet played holiday tunes for their customers. Though they may feel differently about decorations, Hove and Lucas agree it's not quite time for carols.

"I can wait until December for that," Hove said.

Marcus Hathcock is a features reporter for the Oregon Daily Emerald. He can be reached at marcushathcock@dailyemerald.com.

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