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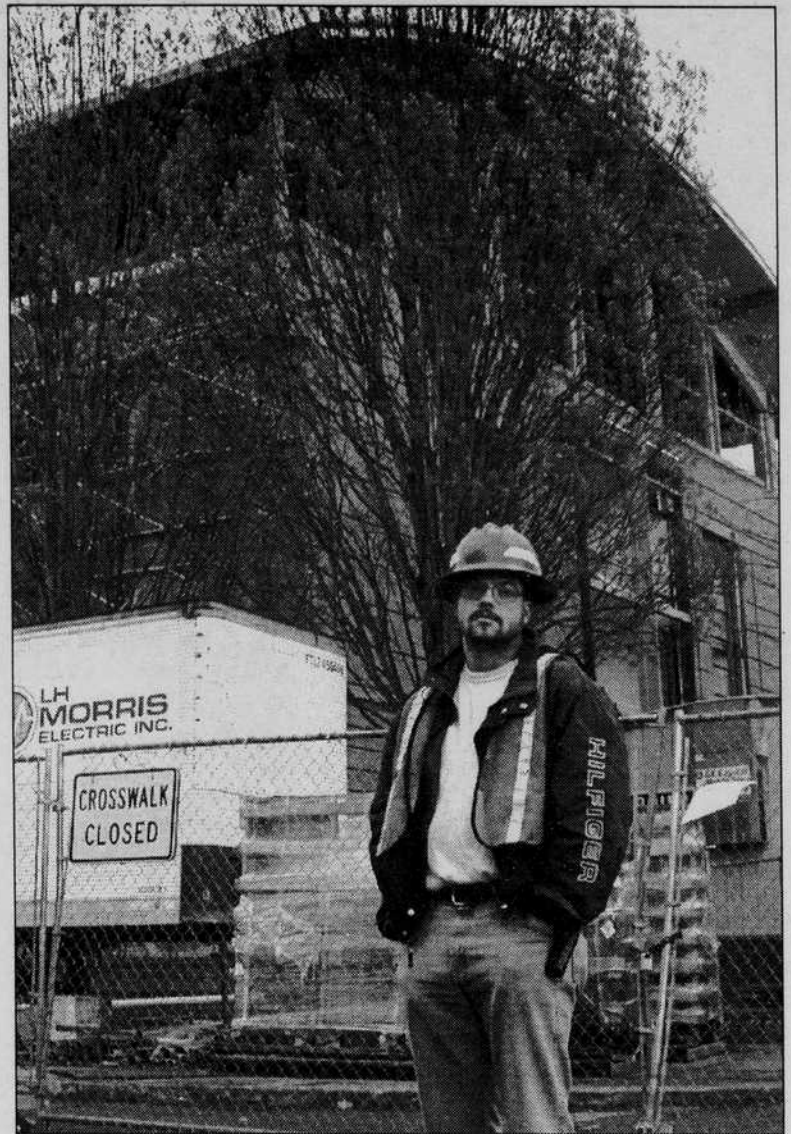
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Adam Jones Emerald

Wes Rees directs traffic along 10th Avenue on Thursday. The new Eugene Public Library, nearing completion, asserts itself as a new landmark downtown.

New library aims to serve students

Officials say Eugene's new facility will attract avid readers, whereas the Knight Library is primarily built for research

By Brook Reinhard
Oregon Daily Emerald

The City of Eugene will finish construction of a new public library within the year, and officials from both the city and campus libraries speculate that students will venture off campus to explore the new facility.

The University's Knight Library is one of Oregon's best research libraries, with a collection of more than 2.5 million books. The new Eugene Public Library is being built to replace the West 13th Avenue location and will house more than 350,000 books when completed.

Mark Watson, associate University librarian for technical services, said he expects students will want to use both libraries once Eugene's project is completed.

"What we put in the library is geared toward research," Watson said. "What we're about is not meeting general reading needs."

Connie Bennett, library services director for the city, agreed with Watson.

"I see the new library as serving the business community, families and students of all age," Bennett said.

The new four-story library, located at 100 W. 10th Ave., takes up half a city block and will provide 127,000 square feet of space for books, library patrons and city offices.

"This move is 20 years overdue," Bennett said, referring to the multiple attempts the city has made in the past to get a new library. In 1998, voters passed an \$8.8 million levy that secured partial funding for the new facility. Using a combination of levy mon-

ey, private donations and bonds, the library will be one of the largest city buildings in Eugene.

"You don't have a major public building go up like this very often," Watson said. He likened the project to the current renovation project at Autzen Stadium — because even people who aren't football fans might see a game in the new facility; likewise, even students who aren't avid readers might take the time to try out the new library.

"What we put in the library is geared toward research. What we're about is not meeting general reading needs."

Mark Watson
associate University librarian

Students may also want to go to the new library to read the latest popular magazines or check out videos and compact discs. Although the Knight Library subscribes to 15,000 periodicals and trade journals, Watson said only a "couple dozen" of them are popular titles, compared to more than 700 magazines that will be offered at the city library.

Library Project Manager Brad Black, who was also the architect responsible for renovating a 1992 Knight Library renovation, said he has received many comments from the community on the project, and he believes the library will be a welcome addition to Eugene.

"The library provides another anchor to the downtown area," he said. "It's more user friendly with more space — in the existing library, it's tough to find a place to sit."

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