

# Fire

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Eugene Fire Department spokesman Glen Potter said "several locations are under consideration." Potter said that if the measure passes, the new live-fire training facility would be located at Second Avenue and Chambers Street.

A recommendation was made by fire and EMS members that the replacement of the current Fire Station No. 1 be a 23,500 square-foot station to occupy a full one-quarter block in or near the downtown area.

City councilors found that Eugene is in need of a new fire station and training facilities. The department has been housed at its present location in City Hall since opening in 1964.

If passed, the levy would allocate \$7.8 million toward construction of the new fire station and \$900,000 to the live-fire training facility, Potter said. For every \$1,000 assessed on personal property, 11 cents would go to the measure. With an average property value of \$143,000, the average citizen could expect to pay \$16 annually, Potter said.

Measure 20-57 differs from previous bonds in that the fire department would receive funding separate from the police department.

Councilors believe the measure

will allow for the continued growth of the community, provide safer quarters for firefighters and provide modern and realistic training conditions for firefighters.

"It's been long acknowledged that we need to replace the building," councilor Scott Meisner said. "Downtown is growing more and more. It also serves as a support station for other stations."

Of another concern to officials, Potter said, are the facilities themselves. When the facility was built, it was made to accommodate only male firefighters. Fire Station No. 1 has since tried to incorporate facilities to meet the needs of both genders. Two years ago, a \$36.6 million bond measure was proposed to voters in the May 2000 primary election. Ballot Measure 20-31 would have financed both a downtown police and fire station. The measure was narrowly defeated, with 53.5 percent of voters opposed to the funding.

The measure was placed on the ballot because neither the police nor fire departments had enough space and because structural examinations of City Hall revealed that the building would not withstand a major earthquake.

"The building is the least capable of supporting an earthquake of all city-owned buildings," Torrey said. Potter stressed the importance of

emergency services in terms of the overall situation of the city.

"You don't want buildings falling on fire trucks and firefighters when a disaster is going on," Potter said.

Voters were again asked to fund police and fire departments in the November 2000 general election. Ballot Measure 20-36, at a cost of \$25.1 million, would have funded the construction of an 80,000-square-foot police station but only would have provided funds for the purchase of property to build a new fire station — not to build the station itself. Measure 20-36 failed, with 61.7 percent of voters opposed.

Now, two years later, city councilors, Torrey and department officials are hopeful voters will provide what they consider to be much-needed funding.

"The citizens voted 'no' twice and I gave it my best shot," Torrey said. "The facility will have to be replaced sometime in the future. ... If this as a stand alone will be supported by the people, it's a bite of the apple."

And if Ballot Measure 20-31 doesn't pass?

"We will maintain services with the status quo until further notice," Potter said.

E-mail community reporter Brad Schmidt at bradschmidt@dailymerald.com.

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# Governor

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"The future of our universities lies in the effective marriage of economics and higher learning," Hill said.

Hill, the former state treasurer, was the only candidate to laud the Oregon Public Employees Retirement System, a comprehensive retirement system that serves more than 160,000 Oregon workers. He also stressed diversifying Oregon's economy and said his "proven track record" at managing the state's portfolio as treasurer from 1992 to 2000 made him an ideal candidate for governor.

Republican Ron Saxton then took the stage, and drew on his experience as chairman of the Portland Public School Board to explain what he would do for education over the coming years if elected.

"Education is critical — it's the most important thing we do for our economy, it's the most important thing we do for our children," Saxton said.

He was quick to vilify the PERS system, which he said was responsible for taking money away from class funding.

"We will address PERS. We will reform it," he said.

Saxton emphasized that the state's economy must be rebuilt to adequately fund education and op-

posed raising taxes to pay for education in Oregon.

"We're not going to have a strong education system unless we have a strong economy," he said.

Republican Jack Roberts said he planned on building bipartisan support for an education plan if elected, and he said education in Oregon needed smarter spending habits, not more money.

"We can throw money at problems forever and never solve them," said Roberts, who is serving his second term as state labor commissioner.

Roberts, like Saxton, said that too much money was being used to pay for teacher payroll and benefits.

"We need to redesign to way we pay for personnel, which is 80 percent of the cost," he said.

Democrat Bev Stein chastised her fellow participants for lofty visions of reform over the next four years.

"You can't just focus on vision," she said. "You must counterpoise that with reality."

She said her efforts to build a grass-roots campaign demonstrated how firmly she was grounded in the community. She pitched an education plan to recruit more teachers, reduce high school dropout rates and keep talented faculty at universities by paying them more.

Stein, the former chairwoman of Multnomah County's Board of Com-

missioners, also praised the University of Oregon's approach to overcrowding, a plan that discounts tuition rates for students enrolling in early morning and late-night classes.

Republican Kevin Mannix, a former Oregon legislator, said he planned to stay in close contact with schools if elected and was the only candidate to specifically commit to increasing funding for higher education. Mannix said he would increase higher education funding by \$350 million over the next four years.

Democrat Ted Kulongoski, the last to answer, said he planned to eliminate the state board of higher education and form one board responsible for education from kindergarten to the university level. At the same time, Kulongoski, the former Oregon Attorney General, said he wanted to restore more local control to education and work closely with families, churches and schools.

Candidates then answered a series of questions from attendees and took political potshots at each other on issues such as PERS and state funding for prisons before concluding the event at 2 p.m. in a series of handshakes and applause.

E-mail reporter Brook Reinhard at [brookreinhard@dailymerald.com](mailto:brookreinhard@dailymerald.com).

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