

## March

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plans to lay down the framework for how collective bargaining will work. To do that, PCUN is negotiating with NORPAC, a company that buys from growers, and then packs, processes and sells their goods.

"In Oregon, there are presently no laws that create a framework for collective bargaining for farmworkers," NORPAC spokesman Brian Bell said.

PCUN and NORPAC are working together to establish a framework. However, state law will provide workers the most protection, so PCUN and NORPAC and other groups are working with Gov. John Kitzhaber to create a bill to introduce to the Oregon Legislature in 2003.

Since its inception, PCUN has been campaigning against NORPAC, trying to get the company to negotiate with farmworkers. The two groups began bargaining in February, Nicholson said, ending a

nine-year boycott. The boycott began in September 1992.

The two groups now hope to begin a peaceful, cooperative effort.

*"Most of the farmworkers experience living conditions that the public can barely imagine."*

**Erik Nicholson**  
PCUN coordinator

"We want to be allies with NORPAC," Nicholson said. "It's going to take a lot of time to build a relationship between us, but we're taking some important first steps in that direction."

One of those steps is the combined efforts of NORPAC and PCUN to get a law passed.

As there is no legal protection for workers, they are vulnerable to unjust treatment, Bell said.

The mistreatment led workers

to begin campaigning against and boycotting NORPAC, as the company has the power to help workers stop the unfair treatment, Bryant said.

"We still have issues in making sure farmworkers make minimum wage," Nicholson said. "Most of the farmworkers experience living conditions that the public can barely imagine."

He added that farmworkers have had to pay for the "right to work on a farm," and there has also been some physical violence against workers, he said.

Others say their concern with the mistreatment of the workers is what inspires them to help, and what makes the cause so important.

"We need to be able to pay farmworkers good wages so they can support their families, but it's more than that," Bryant said. "It's dignity."

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## Loans

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vantage of the new rates. Consolidated loans are fixed based on the rate at the time and can't be reconsolidated.

Also, "If you're in school and you consolidate, you lose your grace period on your loan," Burgett said. "If you decrease your monthly payment with a consolidated loan, you may end up paying longer."

Burgett added that the benefits of loan consolidation depend on how much a borrower can spend per month repaying.

Variable rates for federal student loans are based on the three-month Treasury bill. Adjusted each year on July 1, each new rate remains in effect for 12 months.

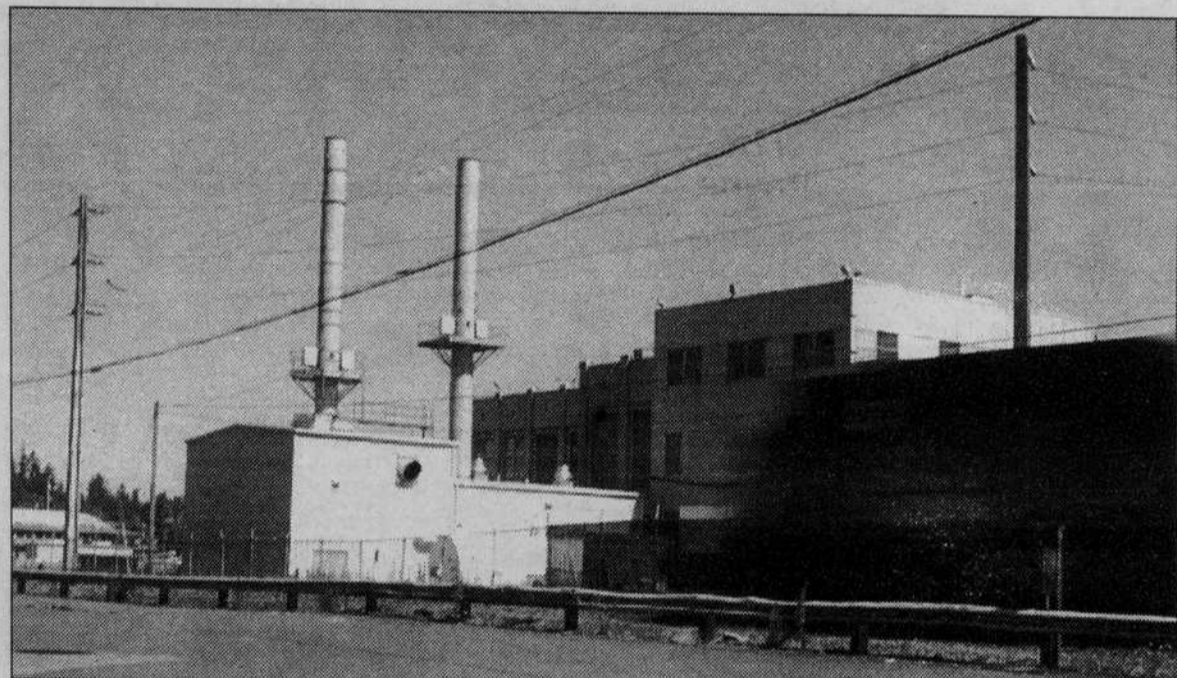
Alternately, consolidated loan rates depend on a formula that weighs the average of the borrower's current loans and rounds up to

the nearest one-eighth percent. The rate then remains static throughout the life of the loan.

According to Carol Wirthman, a student loan regional manager with U.S. Bank, now is the time for students enrolled in classes to apply.

"It is a good time to get new loans," she said. "The rate is the lowest it's ever been."

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Adam Jones Emerald

Along with plans for a new federal courthouse, the land between Franklin Boulevard and the railroad tracks northwest of campus has been looked at as a possible location for a new indoor sports arena.

## Development

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councilors will take into consideration the findings of the Eugene Planning Commission, which is currently working on courthouse plans.

Two months ago, the commission received word from Williams that the University was interested in the land. But without any actual data, commission members removed the proposed development from their plans for the courthouse area June 25.

"The University asked us to reserve the land, and we said, 'We can't do that,'" commission member Jon Belcher said.

Courthouse project manager Nan Laurence said the discussed location could better connect the University and downtown from a transportation standpoint, but she noted that the actual design of the arena will prove to be a major factor in the decision-making process.

Belcher said the overall hope for the courthouse project is to "enhance the neighborhood," and

therefore, serious consideration will be needed to determine whether a new arena would meet the commission's goals.

The desired location is a prime piece of Eugene property, Belcher said, and added that University development would be a "challenge."

*"The University asked us to reserve the land, and we said 'We can't do that.'"*

**Jon Belcher**  
Eugene Planning  
Commission member

Commission member Charles Rusch, the primary proponent of the plan, said he still has concerns about possible parking problems and whether an arena at the location could serve as a multi-use facility.

"It's not dead by any means," said Rusch, who compared the project to a new, \$110 million arena at Michigan State University. "I think the idea has a lot of good

things about it."

Rusch said that discussion likely won't progress until the commission and city councilors receive word about whether the University still hopes to develop the land. Talks up to this point have had the city and the University as project partners, with the understanding that a project of this magnitude would require private donations, Rusch said.

Williams said any plans — which have become much more of a priority with the recent success of the men's and women's basketball teams — are only in conceptual stages right now and completion of a project such as this couldn't be finished until 2005 at the earliest.

McBride said the University hopes to keep a new arena close to campus, and he added that other possible locations include land which now serves as Autzen Stadium's parking lot or other University-owned land.

Contact the sports editor at [bradschmidt@dailyemerald.com](mailto:bradschmidt@dailyemerald.com).



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