

CONSTRUCTION BOOM COULD HELP ECONOMY

Eugene's faltering economy is headed for a major shot in the arm from 10 major construction projects that could pump up to a billion dollars into the local job market in the next five years or so.

Here's a rundown of local projects planned to start soon:

- The state wants to build temporary replacement I-5 bridges over the Willamette and McKenzie rivers at a cost of \$39 million in the next 18 months. Permanent bridges 7 to 10 years later will likely cost well over \$100 million.
- The state plans a massive new freeway interchange at I-5 and Beltline. The first phase, completed by 2006, will cost \$18 million. Later phases are expected to cost at least another \$104 million.
- PeaceHealth plans a \$300 million new hospital in Springfield.
- McKenzie-Willamette plans an \$80 million new hospital, probably in Eugene.
- School District 4J plans to spend \$116 million on new schools and remodeling.
- The federal government is building a \$72 million new courthouse.
- The city of Eugene wants to spend \$9 million a year on street repairs. This month, the city plans to begin work on \$3 million in projects funded in part by the city's new local gas tax. More money will come later if the council goes through with its controversial transportation systems maintenance fee. The city is also spending about \$500,000 in federal money this year for road work at the airport.
- The city of Eugene plans to break ground this fall on an \$8 million new downtown fire station.
- The state wants to spend \$100 million on a new West Eugene Parkway, if it prevails in legal appeals.
- LTD will start construction this summer on a \$11 million Bus Rapid Transit line.

The construction boom could help provide local jobs and boost industry profits. But with projects competing for construction companies, the boom could also drive up costs for local hospitals and taxpayers.

— Alan Pittman

DEFAZIO & WYDEN: CLUELESS LOBBYISTS?

Congressman Peter DeFazio and Oregon Sen. Ron Wyden have been lobbying for the international Hynix Corporation, but were their efforts contrary to sustaining jobs and profits at the Eugene plant?

Last month, Wyden and DeFazio repeatedly urged the International Trade Commission not to raise tariffs against Hynix chips in response to an unfair trade complaint by U.S. competitors.

Wyden and DeFazio complained tariffs would threaten jobs at the Hynix plant in Eugene. "I spoke with the U.S. Secretary of Commerce last week to urge him to set the lowest possible tariff rate in this case," Wyden said in a press release. "Oregonians are struggling with the highest unemployment rate in the country, and now is not the time to let a baseless trade dispute torpedo another 1,000-plus jobs in our state."

"Hynix has been one of the only bright spots in an otherwise dismal economy in southwest Oregon, and unlike many companies, Hynix has rehired employees after temporary layoffs, even in the midst of recession," said DeFazio in a press release.

Wyden and DeFazio's lobbying efforts did not succeed. The Trade Commission upheld a U.S. Commerce Department ruling that imposed a 45 percent tariff on Hynix memory (DRAM) chips. Hynix's low chip prices were illegally propped up by a \$12 billion Korean government bailout, the U.S. found.

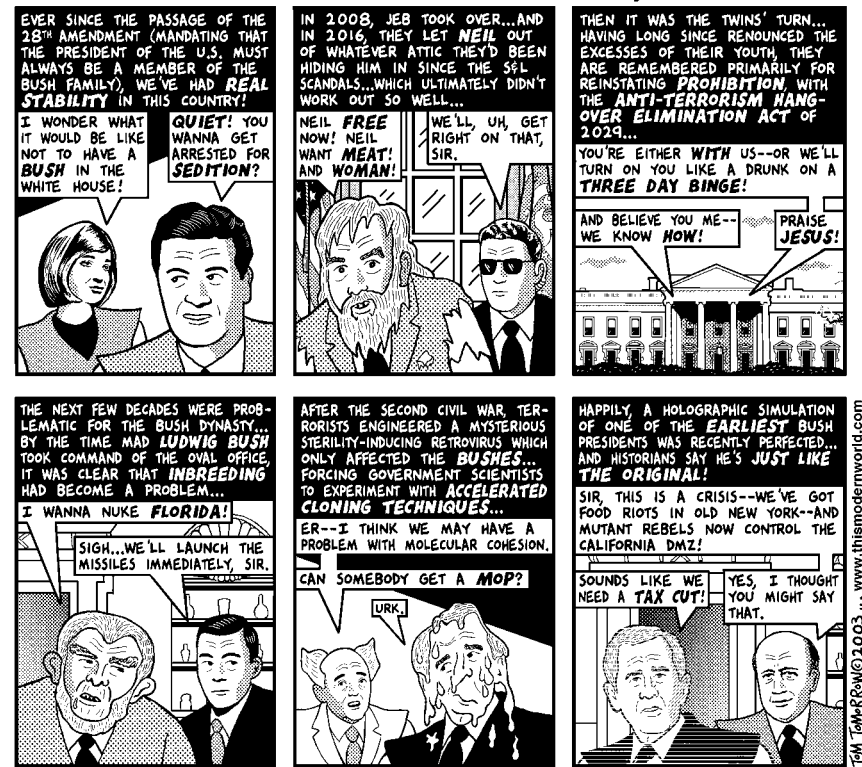
"I'm deeply disappointed," Wyden said in a press release.

But while the tariff could hurt profits at the Korean corporation, the tariff may actually help, not hurt jobs in Eugene. The import duty does not apply to chip production within the U.S., which makes the Eugene plant more important to Hynix as a way to avoid the steep tariff.

Hynix announced in a press release July 24 that in response to the new import tariff, "Hynix will increase the production of DRAMs in its Eugene, Oregon fab, which is not subject to the CVD [tariff] duty imposition, to continue to provide quality DRAMs to its U.S. customers." — AP

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



CONFERENCE FOR PRISONER SUPPORT

Is slavery dead in America? Not if you're behind bars. "After slavery was abolished, they [Congress] made sure that slavery in prison was not," says Brenton Gicker, a core member of the Break the Chains prisoner support collective, and a critic of the 13th Amendment. Adding to the crisis in the American penal system are rising prison populations, declining services, prison privatization and racial injustice, organizers say.

More than 25 lecturers, writers, performers and artists will convene in Eugene Aug. 8-10 for the first conference organized by Break the Chains. The organization formed about two years ago in response to the Jeffrey "Free" Luers and Craig Marshall case, and works for the rights, education and well-being of political and social prisoners in the Pacific Northwest.

Among the speakers at the conference will be Laura Whitehorn, a former political prisoner, writer, and activist currently creating a correspondence course on HIV and hepatitis C for prisoners; Ward Churchill, a noted Native American activist and scholar who explores genocide, colonization, political repression, the penal system, and indigenous peoples' struggles in the Americas; Safiya Bukhari, a former Black Panther and political prisoner who helped found the Mothers Inside Loving Kids (MILK) group, which was created to help women in prison maintain contact with their children, and Jim Page, a songwriter who will be performing after presentations by lesbian prison activists Chrystos and Leslie Bull.

According to Gicker, the conference "should be really nonsectarian and international," dealing with "medical neglect in prison, black nationalism in prison ... all different aspects of the prison situation and the different aspects of resistance to it. Pretty comprehensive."

Lydia Bartholow, another member of the collective, says, "We have workshops on transgender people in prison; we have workshops on women in prison; we have workshops that focus in on Chicanos in prison; we have workshops that focus in on mental illness ... wherever you're coming at it from, there's

going to be something for everyone involved in social change in prison."

The conference will open at 8:30 pm Friday, Aug. 8 at the United Lutheran Church on 22nd and Washington, and close at around midnight Sunday at WOW Hall. All events held at UO are free, while the collective will ask for donations at off-campus sites. More information on additional presenters, locations and times can be found at www.break-thechains.net

"There's one group of people who has absolutely no way of getting their desires out and their word: prisoners. They're a criminalized class, and they can be completely ignored for the most part by the state and by social services agencies," says Bartholow. — *Celene Carillo*

FAST FOR MIND FREEDOM

While Eugene citizens are fasting on the state Capitol steps to protest budget cuts for social services, David Oaks of Eugene will begin a hunger strike this week for human rights in mental health. Oaks is executive director of Support Coalition International.

Oaks says he is planning to join the Fast for Freedom in Mental Health beginning Aug. 16. He will join others in Pasadena, Calif.

"A beautiful mind is a terrible thing to label, forcibly drug and electroshock," says Oaks in a message to supporters, and he quotes Martin Luther King Jr. saying, "The salvation of the world lies in the hands of the maladjusted!"

For more information on the fast, visit www.mindfreedom.org

FARR DEFENDS VOTE ON MEAGER SCHOOL BILL

Responding to criticism from Sen. Tony Corcoran in *EW*, Rep. Pat Farr (R-Dist. 14) says he wants to "assure my friends in education that I will continue to fight for stable and adequate school funding."

Corcoran in his "Insider Baseball" column July 31, says Farr "failed his first big test as a freshman after getting elected as an education supporter. He buckled under pressure from the speaker and voted with the Republicans. His justification, that his school districts would be

Happening people BY PAUL NEEVEL

Yayoe Kuramitsu

"My family was always generous, in spite of the war thing," says Yayoe Kuramitsu, who was born in the Gila Bend internment camp in Arizona in 1943. "They had three grocery stores and a restaurant – fed a lot of people who couldn't pay." Kuramitsu studied art at San Jose State, taught high school for two years on Oahu, then returned for a master's in social work from Boston College. "My mother taught me the concept of service to humanity," she says. After seven years at medical centers in Hawaii, she joined her sister in Eugene in 1977. "It was the best thing I ever did," she says with enthusiasm. "The richness of culture – so many good causes to get involved in." In addition to 19 years at Sacred Heart, where she directed the medical social work department and the Center for Senior Health, Kuramitsu has served on 20-plus boards and committees, from the Oregon Health Plan to Meals on Wheels. Semi-retired for five years now, she consults pro bono at the Alzheimers Association and puts in one full day per week as an eligibility screener at Volunteers in Medicine, a clinic for uninsured working people. "I like to support underdog organizations," she notes. — Paul Neevel

