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SLANT

• Transportation planning in Lane County is a mess. Our bureaucratic system to allocate local, state and federal transportation funds is seriously flawed when it comes to priorities that make sense. The Transportation System Maintenance Fee has been sidetracked by political pressure from the local Chamber of Commerce and pro-development interests. The TSMF is a mixed bag, but don't be surprised if it resurfaces as a more biz-friendly fee that socks homeowners. Meanwhile, our existing roads are crumbling as we continue to allocate our various pots of money to new road construction around the county. As complex and convoluted as our transportation planning system is, it does have some flexibility built into it. Let's dedicate our discretionary funds to maintenance and preservation, not new pavement to appease land speculators.

• Think Eugene is not a very diverse and international community? Look more closely. The evening of Sept. 11 brought together some 400 people of different religious and ethnic backgrounds for an interfaith gathering at First Christian Church. The Native American drum group Gasa Sehe Deneh began the evening of music, words and prayers of unity and peace. The drummers were followed by Protestant, Hindu, Buddhist, Islam, Baha'i, Catholic, Jewish and Sikh presentations. These remarkable gatherings on the 11th of each month are in stark contrast to the world-is-going-to-hell headlines of today.

• One of our readers this week pointed out that Bush has asked for \$87 billion for the next installment on his war, \$66 billion of which is "for the military action in Iraq." That comes to \$4.4 million of our tax dollars for each of our 150,000 soldiers stationed there. That will buy a lot of bullets, she says. Where will the rest go? Lubricants? We doubt that Bush even knows what he's been instructed to ask for. But we will all pay and pay and pay.

• EW is signed up for the fourth annual Commute Challenge Oct. 6-10, and we encourage other businesses to jump on the bandwagon – or the bus or a bicycle – and challenge us. We can bitch about traffic and pollution until we're blue in the butt, but the biggest impact we can have as individuals is to leave our cars at home (or not have a car at all) and find other ways to get to work, school and shopping. To find out more, contact Cindy.J.Clark@ci.eugene.or.us or call 682-5285.

SLANT includes short opinion pieces, observations and rumor-chasing notes compiled by the EW staff. Heard any good rumors lately? Contact Ted Taylor at 484-0519, editor@eugeneweekly.com



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