



Kevin Matthews (right) promises a lawsuit if the MPC takes action.

MPC GIVES NOD TO ROADWORK

The Metropolitan Policy Committee (MPC) pushed through a list of amendments to a regional transportation plan in an emergency meeting Dec. 30 that was called “profoundly unfair” and an “unfriendly public process” by critics in the audience (see earlier news story, “Shadow Government,” 12/16).

MPC chairwoman Bonny Bettman called for additional time to allow the Eugene City Council to review the amendments and the meeting drew promises of lawsuits from Kevin Matthews, president of Friends of Eugene, a local land use watchdog group involved in several successful challenges to PeaceHealth’s land use plans.

Former Mayor Jim Torrey requested the meeting in a last-minute attempt to promote new road projects that compete with funds for maintenance and preservation of existing roads. The city currently has a \$94 million backlog in road repairs. The embattled \$150 million-plus West Eugene Parkway (WEP),

opposed by new Mayor Kitty Piercy, was on the list of Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP) changes made by the MPC in the emergency meeting. Other approved projects included the I-5/Beltline interchange and the extension Airport Road.

“This mockery of public process is at the least a slap in the face to the general public, and at worst a misuse of authority by elected officials,” said 1000 Friends of Oregon Lane County Planning Advocate Lauri Segel. “It is no secret that this meeting is unwarranted at this time, considering that a five- or six-month window is currently available for adoption of the proposed 2005-07 MTIP. It is also no secret that this meeting was initiated by Mayor Torrey for the purpose of ensuring that Mayor-elect Piercy and a new City Council have no opportunity to put some transparency into the process of planning for future transportation facilities.”

Segel also voiced concern about “feet-dragging” in the appointment of a Citizen Advisory Committee and “little or no public review period” regarding addition of multiple changes to the proposed MTIP amendments. “There is a lot wrong with this picture, and it is time to put an end to long standing practices that are in clear violation of state and federal transportation planning policies.”

In the final vote on the MTIP, Bettman’s was the only hand raised in opposition.

Approval of the MTIP is not the last hurdle before construction of the WEP begins, but it is considered a step in that direction. ODOT has yet to sign off on the project, and

the WEP faces legal challenges if approved by state and federal agencies. — TJJ

JUNGLE JAMS FOR TSUNAMI

Satin Love Orchestra, Whopner County Country Allstars, J C Rico & Zulu Dragon, I-Chele’ & The Circle of Light, and The Fuzz are joining Lane County community members in a benefit for tsunami victims at The Jungle Sunday, Jan. 9.

The Tsunami Relief Benefit Concert begins at 5 pm and is open to adults over 21. Suggested minimum donation is \$15. The club’s employees will be working for free and donating their tips so that 100 percent of the evening’s proceeds will go to relief projects.

The Jungle is located at 23 W. 6th Ave. For more information contact The Jungle at 338-9000 or Jaguar Productions at 747-6612.

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

Resolved to be more politically and environmentally active in 2005? The Oregon Conservation Network (OCN) is organizing a series of free training sessions around the state this month, including a “citizen lobby” training” from 6:30 to 9 pm Thursday, Jan. 13 at EWEB in Eugene. Other sessions will be held in Salem on Jan. 19 and Portland Jan. 26.

Participants will learn techniques for communicating with lawmakers, writing ef-

fective letters to the editor and testifying at public hearings.

“Many folks are looking for ways to make a difference after the election and our citizen lobby training is one direction that community members can go with their work,” says Jennifer DeMuth, field organizer of the Oregon League of Conservation Voters, one of the groups involved.

Space is limited. To register, contact DeMuth at: (503) 227-8073 or e-mail jdemuth@olcv.org

LONGHOUSE OPENS JAN. 11

Nine federally recognized Native American tribes will join with UO officials in a public dedication and opening ceremony for the UO Many Nations Longhouse at 11:30 am Tuesday, Jan. 11. The Longhouse will be a gathering spot and welcoming space for all Native Americans and the general public. This free public event will take place at 1630 Columbia St. in the area behind the Natural History Museum. The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs will provide a salmon feast after the ceremony.

CORRECTIONS/ CLARIFICATIONS

In our news story on biodiesel fuel Dec. 23, the name of the office manager quoted at the end of the article was misspelled, due to a reporter’s error. His name is Carl Burdick.

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