

values and vision for preserving heritage trees, promoting equity in street-improvement assessments, and maintaining neighborhood character.

Are the neighbors in Santa Clara just against a large community park that would accompany a land-swap proposal and development scheme from the McDougal Bros.? It may be that residents are asking savvy questions about the impacts of new development on already-strapped transportation infrastructure and schools, and about the loss of prime Class 1 farmland that would result from an urban growth boundary expansion.

Is it that the four neighborhoods adjacent to the Union Pacific Railyard are simply against noisy trains? Maybe they are searching for a way to prioritize a community-wide public planning process for this large, polluted industrial site and to envision a future use for the site that would be compatible with the surrounding neighborhoods as well as the broader community.

Are the residents of the West University Neighborhood just concerned about student housing rented from out-of-town landlords? Or can we hear that these neighbors want to shepherd the interests of both the local community and the university?

Is it that the county residents of River Road and Santa Clara are simply enemies of the city of Eugene who want to be left alone? Maybe these residents have legitimate concerns about whether annexation to the city and the accompanying rise in property taxes will mean a commensurate increase in urban-service delivery.

Are neighbors downwind of the JH Baxter plant in Trainsong and Bethel being



cal environment?

Eugene has almost 20 active neighborhood associations that, during this past year, have published more than 60 newsletters or postcards and collectively have held hundreds of meetings, election forums, and potlucks. Food, schools, living-wage jobs, and the natural environment are common currencies of our shared values and vision.

## Labor

By Gary Gillespie

The Eugene-Springfield Solidarity Network is a coalition of labor, environmental, educational and faith-based groups in Lane County working to educate, activate and agitate for social and economic justice. ESSN is also a national Jobs With Justice Chapter.

In 2005, ESSN will continue our work in a couple of areas as well as add an additional cause or two. We will continue to

*The Register-Guard*. In view of repeated violations by the *R-G* and their lead negotiator, the contract campaign more resembled a war of attrition than a protected labor-rights negotiation.

In 2004, we organized two demonstrations at Wal-Mart opposing the expansion of the West 11th store to a Super Center. The AFL-CIO stated intentions to organize Wal-Mart workers, and ESSN anticipates participating in that effort. Wal-Mart is expanding at an annual rate of 15 percent and is the largest private non-union employer in the country. Their workers earn nearly 30 percent less than other grocery workers.

ESSN was pleased to hear Mayor Piercy call economically sustainable business support and development a key part of her administration's goals. Educating our community as to the importance of community standards was a cornerstone of our work in 2004. Criteria for the use of public funds in economic development

colleges and public universities; keep Project Independence for seniors; and restore the Oregon Health Plan. Worthy efforts, all.

And those of you who have followed the efforts of ESSN in establishing a living-wage ordinance related to the expenditure of public funds for private contractors may be asking yourselves: "What gives with that?"

I'll simply update (in more politically-correct terminology) an old phrase originally attributed to basketball coach Dick Motta, and say that the plus-sized sister isn't about to sing, yet.

## Land-Use and Transportation

By Kevin Matthews

Wetlands highway — riverfront highway — upland habitat denial — riverfront commercialization — urban-renewal germyanders — UGB for sale. Four years of a developer-directed City Council majority have pushed Eugene to the brink of crisis.

Starting right now, the real changes in city leadership that so many of you have worked so hard and so well for bring real new possibilities.

Consensus has been growing across our community around shared visions of economic justice and environmental quality, as evidenced by election of Kitty Piercy as our new mayor, by the ongoing discussions of the Jobs and Land Use Roundtable, and by the coalition of groups bringing you this Citizens State of the City presentation.

However, contrary forces of often dis-

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unreasonable to want to go outdoors without having to breathe toxic air? Is it that residents of the Friendly neighborhood are just wannabe cops? Or are they to be commended for making streets safer by staffing a residents radar patrol?

Can we accept that the citizenry is informed when they ask for *not just any* external review for police, but an external-review process that has proven to be successful elsewhere?

Eugene finds itself at a crossroads. Our new mayor, Kitty Piercy, is aware of the importance of supporting grassroots neighborhood vision. Our city manager, Dennis Taylor, got his start in civic advocacy and public service in Helena, Mont., after his downtown neighborhood was punctured by urban-renewal decisions that resulted in a monstrous parking lot. Our police chief, Robert Lehner, champions community policing as a tool to help neighborhood residents and businesses build trust and accountability with their civic institutions.

Can we acknowledge school choice while simultaneously infusing neighborhood schools with the support and funding they need, so families can keep their children in the neighborhood, building community pride and connection to the physi-

educate and inform with regards to the struggle of workers to organize and maintain a voice in the workplace through union representation. At this very time, members of Amalgamated Transit Union are on the verge of striking in order to retain current benefits and stop the implementation of unfavorable work rules. Their employer, Lane Transit District, appears willing to cripple the county transportation system in order to implement their last best offer.

We are recruiting community leaders for a Workers' Rights Board, which will serve as a public forum for workers to air their grievances and will facilitate community support to seek redress of those grievances. A WRB is the union's counter response to the pro-corporate actions of the National Labor Rights Board. In light of George Bush's efforts to stack the NLRB with anti-worker members, we in the labor movement now refer to the NLRB as the "No Labor Rights Board."

The near-total ineffectiveness of this organization in protecting the rights of workers was never more evident that during the prolonged contract negotiations by the members of the Newspaper Guild and the Teamsters in their three-plus-year negotiations with the Baker family and

must be defined and enforced. Only establishing such criteria will regain the support of taxpayers in the Eugene-Springfield area.

Promoting tax justice through educational workshops will be another key element of ESSN's 2005 activities. In cooperation with the Oregon AFL-CIO and the Oregon Center for Public Policy, ESSN is shining a bright light on the tax credits, exemptions, and deductions offered by the State of Oregon to special-interest groups.

Since 1995, Oregon income-tax revenues have grown by 58 percent, while income tax breaks have grown by 108 percent. In 1995, Oregon gave away in tax breaks 39 cents on the dollar. Today that figure has risen to 46 cents on the dollar. And sadly, those increased tax breaks have gone to the wealthy, rather than to those in need of assistance. Total revenue given up in the form of tax breaks for the next biennium is expected to equal \$8.8 billion.

If Oregon just reverted to the tax break levels of 1995-97, it would collect another \$1.3 billion in addition to the \$10.5 in the projected 2005-07 period. This additional \$1.3 billion would more than provide funding for a full school year, without increasing K-12 class sizes. It would also allow for tuition freezes at our community

tantly driven real-estate speculation and of deeply rooted local privilege are busily jockeying for angles of counter-attack. How shall we respond at this historical tipping point?

Lisa Arkin has already spoken about several aspects of sustainability. Yet so much of our environmental and economic impacts have to do with the two intertwined threads of land use and transportation.

Without achieving sustainability and excellence in our land-use and transportation choices, we probably can't achieve it much of anywhere else.

• Civic Center development, done with historical and urban sensitivity, could enhance downtown. Pedestrian downtown really could be connected with a living, green riverfront. Mixed-use development of open pits and paved lots downtown could move it closer to the Node-One status it needs and deserves.

• We need an updated and improved approach to downtown planning that is more realistic and more visionary at the same time, that goes beyond the goals of the last mayor's committee.

• We need a city planning department that really listens when there is citizen input, or a design charette like we had for