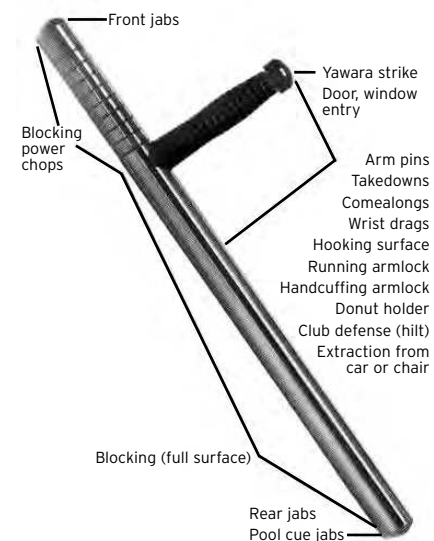


news Briefs



COP VIOLENCE DOCUMENTED

Eugene police used force 194 times over the last two years, sending 23 officers to the hospital, according to the EPD's first ever report on use of force.

Police broke three people's bones and shot one person dead in Creswell during 2003 and 2004. Eight percent of force victims complained, but police dismissed all but one complaint against themselves.

Police punched or slapped 42 people and elbowed, kneed or kicked 35 people. Police clubbed 43 people and shot 12 people with rubber bullets or bean bag rounds. Officers pepper-sprayed 96 people, threw 106 to the ground, and inflicted pain on 79 people through pressure points or joint twisting. One officer choked a person's neck arteries.

In most force incidents, police used more than one type of force. Officers significantly injured people 55 percent of the time when they used force.

During the force incidents, seven officers were injured enough that they went to the hospital. In 22 cases the subject had a knife, in one

a gun. Five officers reported sprains and 33 cuts or scrapes. A quarter of the time officers used pepper spray, they unintentionally sprayed themselves. — Alan Pittman

HYNIX NIXES PAYING TAXES

Over the last decade, the city of Eugene has given Hynix almost twice as much in tax breaks than the corporation has actually paid in taxes. From 1996 to 2005, Eugene gave Hynix \$51.2 million in property tax breaks and Hynix paid only \$26.5 million in taxes.

Most of Hynix's enterprise zone tax exemptions have now expired. But because of the rapid depreciation of the corporation's chip plant equipment, the factory has lost about 90 percent of its assessed value, and Eugene has lost out on most of the taxes it could have realized from the original \$1.3 billion factory.

— Alan Pittman

MUCK IN THE RIVER

Due to high flows in the sewer system caused by recent downpours on May 9 and 10 the regional Water Pollution Control Facility discharged treated wastewater into the Willamette River in excess of the total suspended solids limits specified in its wastewater discharge permit. All discharged wastewater was treated and disinfected. The incident was the WPCF's first such violation in 14 years. The WPCF notified the DEQ and announced that the public was not at risk.

Suspended solids are particles in the water from sanitary waste, industrial waste and agricultural runoff.

The cities of Eugene and Springfield plan to expand their Metropolitan Wastewater Management Commission Facilities Plan to protect the Willamette River from future violations of this kind.

VIGILS FOR HEALING

A local group has formed to carry out



month-long daily vigils, combined with a hunger fast, for world healing. The vigils began with a ceremony held Sunday, May 15, at the Federal Building, 7th and Pearl in Eugene. An estimated 100 people gathered in light rain for the event, which included singing and talk.

Longtime peace activist Charles Gray, now in his 80s, welcomed the crowd and urged all "who dare to hope, who dare to love, who have courage to rise above despair and take action."

Organizer Peg Morton said the group carried panels from the 1985 Ribbon Around the Pentagon, provided by Justine Merritt, the Eugene resident who originated the 10-mile long ribbon of hand-decorated fabric. Merritt talked about her vision of creating a new "Ribbon of Tangible Hope" as the 60th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima approaches.

The daily vigils are scheduled to continue until Saturday, June 11, and will take place from noon to 1 pm at the Federal Building and from 4 to 5:30 pm at the Eugene Public Library. The final Saturday will involve a ceremony and perhaps a parade through the Saturday Market.

"These will be vigils not of confrontation but rather an invitation into a vision of hope,"

says Morton. "We are reminded that the whole world is hungry — for food, and for a new vision."

The vigils were first planned to end Sunday, June 12, but will end a day earlier in order for people to join a statewide gathering and peace march in Salem June 12.

The vigils are endorsed by Progressive Responses of Community Alliance for Lane County (CALC) and Faith In Action. For more information, call 342-2914.

GENDER CODE DELAYED

The proposal to add gender identity to the list of protected classes in the City of Eugene Human Rights Code is still in the works, but will not be on the City Council agenda until fall, according to an apologetic message sent out to activists by Karen Hyatt of the Eugene Human Rights Program.

Hyatt said the earlier timeline included a number of meetings with the council in April, May and June, but "the timeline has been delayed" and there will be no public hearing at the May 23 City Council meeting. "We apologize for

SLANT

• Our cover story package this week on downtown might be seen as overly optimistic. After all, we and other local media have been writing about the future of downtown for many years, and yet storefronts remain vacant, old buildings continue to deteriorate, and nightlife is only in scattered pockets. What's new this time around? There is a buzz of anticipation and excitement downtown that we haven't seen in a while, and it's due to lots of little and not-so-little infusions of energy and innovation, from the massive new federal building to the great little eateries on Pearl. We hope it's true that commercial property owners Connor & Woolley are ready to do their magic downtown and create wonderful living spaces and places. If they delay again, revitalization will still happen, just more slowly. Regardless of how we feel about growth and development, Eugene is about to be discovered. All we have to do is look around. Medford and Ashland downtowns are booming, urban Bend is taking off, *Oregonian* headlines this week scream of skyrocketing real estate prices in Portland. The big question for us is, how do we

as a community stay ahead and guide what's coming? We need an on-going discussion of how we can evolve sustainably and create a vibrant urban core where our own little pocket of civilization can flourish. Let the debates begin in earnest.

• A public safety taxing district for all of Lane County would require complicated and far-reaching changes in the Eugene-Springfield Metropolitan Plan. Springfield city councilors gave their nod to the changes this week and Eugene councilors will have their say Monday evening, May 23. The county is pushing for the taxing district, but it's an all-around bad idea and the Eugene council needs to cut it off at the knees. Now. Not later when it might be too late. The plan amendment would in effect exempt the taxing district from any of the policies in the Metro Plan. The district could even set its own boundaries. And if voters are frightened into approving a new district, the tax burden would affect other taxes that are already committed, such as Eugene's local option school funding.

The pie is only so big, due to tax-limiting Measures 5 and 47. Do we really want the county dictating Eugene Police funding? And what happens if not all the cities in the county agree to the taxing district, a likely scenario? Lane County DA Doug Harclerod is playing the fear card with his recent announcement that his office will no longer prosecute most property crimes. The timing of this announcement points out its political nature. Harclerod wants an infusion of \$20 million to \$40 million a year to fix a deficit of a few million dollars. Harclerod says it's the "only viable solution," but it's just not true. Yes, public safety in Lane County is underfunded, but the county has ways of raising money for its general fund that would free up money for public safety. A good place to start would be system development charges (SDCs) to fund transportation and parks. How about closer auditing of administrative services and expense accounts? Throwing local government into the shredder with a broad new tax district is not the answer.