



THE R-G'S TRIAD SITE

Is *The Register-Guard* going to cash in on Triad?

The *R-G* owns a vacant 47-acre business park on Chad Drive in north Eugene that has enough room to accommodate Triad's proposed new hospital. The *R-G*'s developer for its Summer Oaks Business Park, Dan Tucci, said he hasn't heard the hospital is interested in the site.

The paper announced in April that it was asking the city to rezone the land from an industrial designation to commercial. That zon-

ing change could make it easier to build a hospital on the land.

If Triad builds at the *R-G* site, the paper will make a huge profit. The *R-G* bought one 23-acre piece of the property for about \$1 million in 1996. Now the county has put the market value of that land at \$6 million. But the land could sell for much more. PeaceHealth paid land speculators about \$20 million for its hospital site in north Springfield.

While the *R-G* would reap millions, taxpayers would be stuck with the bill for millions of dollars in road and other infrastructure to serve the site on the edge of town. Already, the city plans to spend \$500,000 in street money to extend Chad Drive to provide

easier connection to I-5.

Even if Triad doesn't build on the *R-G*'s property, the daily paper could still make millions if the hospital chooses one of several possibly available sites just to the north along Coburg Road. The *R-G* could then cash in on building nearby ancillary medical offices for the hospital on its rezoned property.

The *R-G*'s mixed mission as a major developer and a newspaper could present a conflict of interest. The *R-G*'s coverage of locating the hospital in downtown Eugene has been largely negative and has failed to describe how a central hospital location would save on costly urban sprawl, prevent traffic congestion and make the city more livable.

The *R-G* has argued in its rezoning request and in articles that there is not a demand for the industrial zoned land at its site. But that assessment conflicts with state and local economic development officials who have said there is a lack of shovel-ready industrial sites. Commercial zoned land is often worth far more than industrial zoned land.

— Alan Pittman

CHEM-FREE CITY PARKS?

Seattle did it. Portland did it. Salem did it. Now Eugene, too, might kick pesticides out of some public parks.

The Northwest Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides (NCAP), the nonprofit that

drove pesticide-free park initiatives in Portland and Salem, met with city park staff on Oct. 12 to discuss the potential for a similar program in Eugene. Park staff were open to the idea but will gauge public support before moving forward.

The vision: With community input, city staff would choose several small neighborhood parks for a pesticide-free trial run, replacing herbicide use with non-chemical methods. Volunteers would provide some of the extra elbow grease.

The Eugene Parks Department already uses integrated pest management (IPM) techniques such as hand weeding, mulching, mowing, planting native vegetation and using eco-friendly products to limit pesticide use in public parks. Some areas, like Scobert Park and several open spaces around the university, are managed without pesticides. But in other parks, staff spray the herbicide glyphosate (the active ingredient in Roundup) to control tough invasive weeds and maintain hard-to-mow areas. According to the Toxics Right-to-Know database, the city applied 185 pounds of glyphosate and 120 pounds of other pesticides to public open spaces in 2004.

The city's IPM program has been in effect for years, but it's not yet an official park policy. The pesticide-free parks initiative could help shape the effort to get the city's pest management policy on paper.

Eugene Parks Maintenance Manager Kevin Finney emphasizes that the city will try pesticide-free parks only if the commu-

EWEB
Free online bill pay.

EASY FAST SECURE CONVENIENT

As your citizen-owned public utility, you can rely on the Eugene Water & Electric Board to give you more options for managing your electric and water service. And your time.

Now you can use the speed and convenience of the Internet to view and pay your monthly bill. No more checks to write, stamps to buy or envelopes to mail. More time to do the things you like to do.

It's free, fast and secure.

Eugene Water & Electric Board *Rely on us.*

Freedom to play.

Log onto www.eweb.org, click on **view and pay bill** under **my account**.

Enroll today to:

- pay your bill online
- view your monthly statement and usage history
- receive bill reminders by email