

• “Leiken’s candidacy feels shift” is the headline in a 1,600-word *Springfield News* opinion piece published Nov. 16. The author is Eugene free-lancer George Beres writing on Springfield Mayor Sid Leiken’s filing for county commissioner, challenging incumbent Bill Dwyer in 2006. The article chronicles Leiken’s shift from supporting Dwyer to opposing Dwyer, Leiken’s dealings with PeaceHealth and land speculator John Musumeci, and Leiken’s potential conflicts of interest regarding Glenwood development. “Uneasiness is created when an elected official has close ties with big money interests,” writes Beres. “It grows if those ties are undisclosed, only partly disclosed, or not disclosed in a timely fashion.” Beres has no damning revelations in his tale – it’s unclear whether Leiken has stepped over the line when it comes to the inevitable conflicts of interest that all politicians have. Beres does shed some light on how business and government are intertwined, sometimes with backroom deals and “hidden machinations.” Beres tells us he relied on research from the *Springfield News* staff for his commentary, but apparently he didn’t talk to the mayor. “Who is George Beres? I don’t know him at all,” Leiken tells us. “The reaction from everyone I have been negative toward him and his piece.” See the archives at www.springfieldnews.com for the complete commentary.



George Beres



Sid Leiken

- What's particularly frustrating about the whole dragged-out squabble over hospital siting is that there is no real public input and involvement. All citizens can do (if they have the money) is go to court. All local elected officials can do is offer limited financial incentives or try to block or delay land-use approvals. But these siting decisions are vitally important to the public interest. They are key to shaping the future of our metropolitan area; and these decisions can be a matter of life and death. If you are in south or southwest Eugene and have a heart attack, stroke or a life-threatening accident during rush hour, it could take 30 minutes from dialing 911 before you arrive at a major trauma center up north. South Eugene councilor Betty Taylor this week voted against having our city manager pursue a memorandum of understanding with Triad for a north Eugene hospital. So, where do we go from here? It might be unheard of for a state agency such as Oregon Public Health Services to hold public hearings or information sessions on hospital sitings, but this is Eugene. We debate everything, and the turnout for such a meeting would be huge. We are trying to understand the issues surrounding medical facilities, and attempting to have a voice in our future.

- The threat of Triad/McKenzie-Willamette building in Glenwood appears to be motivating Eugene's mayor and council to consider an illogical hospital site. But Glenwood is actually closer to downtown than the proposed hospital site at RiverRidge Golf Course. And more and more, Eugene, Springfield and Glenwood are becoming one city. Many UO students live in Springfield, about half of Springfield breadwinners work in Eugene. We share an urban growth boundary. We work on transportation and air quality issues together. Our land-use rules are much more alike than different. We share riparian habitat and parkland. Our political divisions are mellowing. Even our criminals ignore the arbitrary lines on the map. We will likely never merge into Springene or Eugenefield, but it's time to recognize we're all part of a larger community with shared concerns.

• Big story in last Sunday's real estate section of *The New York Times* asked this question about Bend: "Can a city grow quickly and stay simple?" Projecting that the population of 65,000 will double in 10 years, the writer repeatedly pointed out that this high-desert city, sixth fastest growing in the country, has

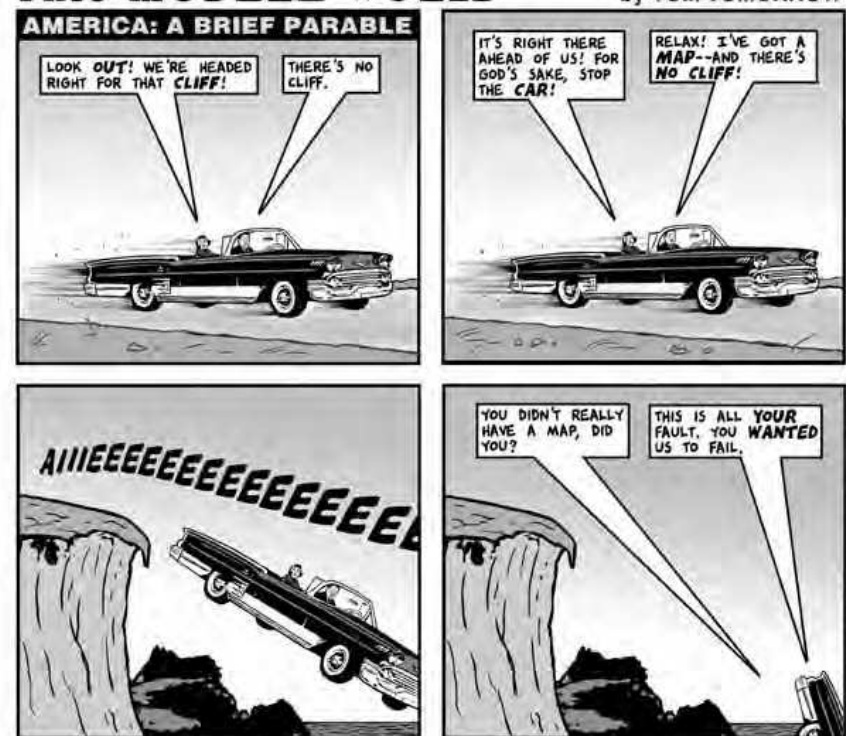


no public transportation system. If you've been snarled in Bend traffic lately, you're probably wondering, like we are, how long it will take those folks to support a transit district. Judging by the comments in the article, it could be a very long time.

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

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



news Briefs

SITE DEBATE CONTINUES

Lane County Commissioner Bill Dwyer last week called for Triad-McKenzie Willamette Medical Center (MWMC) to build a new hospital in Glenwood instead of the newly announced site north of the Eugene city limits. Triad officials have announced that a Glenwood site would be their second choice for a new medical center to compete with PeaceHealth's regional medical center currently under construction in north Springfield.



Bill Dwyer

Dwyer in a prepared statement said many “minefields,” such as rezoning, transportation, agricultural land use, metro plan issues, neighborhood and “other thorny barriers could be avoided” with a hospital relocation to Glenwood.

Dwyer, the Springfield-based county commissioner and a member of the Springfield Economic Development Agency, said he believes the “costly and serious transportation problems which confront the proposed Eugene site could be avoided.”

Dwyer also said that MWMC would not have to wait long to get started, and. "Glenwood is on the Eugene side and west of the river. Citizens of both communities and beyond would be well served by the move to Glenwood."

Dwyer added, "For about 50 years the people of Springfield have sacrificed thou-

sands of hours and millions of dollars to create, sustain and expand McKenzie-Willamette, including almost \$3 million in tax forgiveness this past decade alone. Springfield folks took great pride in building their community hospital.”

"It would be unfair considering the investment, hard work and related gifts of generations of Springfielders over decades to see the people's investment leave greater Springfield," he said.

Springfield, however, will soon have a major regional medical center with PeaceHealth building at RiverBend, and the future of the existing MWMC is still undecided. MWMC is upgrading its current

facilities for cardiac services, and anticipates being in the same location for at least three more years.

Hospital spokesperson Rosie Pryor says MPMC “could consider keeping some outpatient services here, since our Springfield community is accustomed to getting their care in this location.” But she also notes that some of the buildings cannot be remodeled due to asbestos concerns, “but other parts could be re-used as continuous care facilities, etc.”

PeaceHealth is also upgrading its Hilyard facilities. Could the metro area end up with four hospitals? Pryor says “it should be of greater concern that many of the highest margin/least risk diagnostic and surgical procedures are now being taken out of hospitals by physician groups into free-standing diagnostic and surgery centers ... This leaves hospitals to care for those who are the least stable, most infectious, or most sick or broken. Unlike free-standing centers, hospitals cannot screen patients and cannot turn away anyone who presents at the ER seeking care, regardless of their ability to pay.” — *Ted Taylor*

NEW ALLY FOR STUDENTS

A new citizen group has joined the coalition of students, campus organizations and