

news Briefs

City Club speakers from left are: David Hinkley, Terry Connolly, Rob Handy and Dan Hill.



last Friday, the second part will be at 11:50 am Friday, April 14 at the Downtown Athletic Club. Admission is free for City Club members and \$3 for non-members.

The April 7 meeting focused on "Land-Use Planning: What's Wrong With Eugene?" and this week's meeting will look at solutions. Speakers last week were David Hinkley of Friends of Eugene, Terry Connolly of the Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce, architect Dan Hill of Lane County Homebuilders, and Rob Handy of the Eugene Neighborhood Leaders Council.

Handy said "neighborhoods are at the core of our economic, social and family life. It only makes sense that neighborhood residents should have significant roles in the planning process." He said Eugene's planning department is not neutral and favors developers over residents, and doesn't deal adequately with transportation and livability issues. He said public input is either too early or too late to affect development, and planning "too frequently benefits short-term private economic gain over broader, long-term community values." One example, he said, was approval for medical offices in the Chase Gardens Mixed Use Center, an area where residents spent years planning for neighborhood retail and grocery.

Hill cited a lack of vision in the Eugene planning process, and complained of short-sighted restrictions on buildings that cause more problems than they solve. For example, he said Eugene's excessive set-backs and minimal lot coverage standards encourage two-story buildings. He also said public input can lead to problems and delays since "most citizens are not planning experts," and the city has "gone too far in allowing individuals and groups to stall out projects."

Hinkley said Eugene has "no single supermajority held community vision" on what it wants to be as a city, other than the 19 council-adopted Growth Management Policies that are subject to interpretation or ignored. He said development standards are "too vague" or are applied arbitrarily, and development projects can be either delayed excessively, or rushed through quickly, as in the Whole Foods project. Another example he gave was the \$1.3 million budgeted to promote and plan the new City Hall. "They are asking what should have been the first question last," he said.

Connolly said planning is important, but it's "not an exact science, and cannot predict

the future," particularly as the economy and the housing marketing change. He said "If the bar of perfection in planning is set too high, the outcome may be unattainable, no matter how much time, resources and citizen input gets put into the planning process," and "if we want more land off the tax roles for parks and open spaces, then the tradeoff is we need to ensure sufficient land still available or made available for people to live, work and generate the tax revenue that pays for essential city services."

From the audience, architect Otto Poticha asked a tough question for the panel: Eugene's planning is focused on zoning, and there's no real big plans for Eugene, he said, and the result is mediocrity. "So does community planning really matter?"

This Friday's luncheon meeting, perhaps providing answers to Poticha's question, will be broadcast on KLCC 89.7 FM at 6:30 pm Monday, April 17. — *Ted Taylor*

BAD JOBS GET BIG BREAKS

State and local officials showered the new Royal Caribbean call center opening recently near Gateway Mall with hoopla, handouts and tax breaks.

Most of the 230 new jobs at the call center will pay only \$9.25 an hour. That's only \$1.75 above minimum wage. At \$9.25 a person would earn \$19,296 a year, well below the average Lane County salary of about \$33,000.

It's also far less than a family wage. Economists estimate a family of two parents with two kids here needs about \$42,000 a year to meet basic subsistence needs such as food, shelter, clothes and transportation.

Call centers are widely seen as among the least valuable industries to attract to a city. The jobs are often low wage and high turnover and can easily leave for places with lower taxes and labor costs.

Despite the low-quality jobs, state and local economic development officials gave the Royal Caribbean corporation \$1.3 million in taxpayer money in grants. Officials also gave the corporation an enterprise zone tax break, worth about \$1 million a year for at least the next three to five years. The millions in tax breaks will be diverted from funding



West Lane Herbicide

• **Lane County Public Works** plans to begin spraying herbicides again (Orin Schumacher, IVM Coordinator: 682-6908). Check Commissioners' Agendas to find out when the hearing will occur to consider changes to the Last Resort Herbicide Use Policy, and to approve the list of herbicides to be used, at www.co.lane.or.us/BCC/AgendaHome.htm; more information at www.lanecounty.org/RoadMaint/LastResort.htm and www.co.lane.or.us/RoadMaint/Vegprescriptions.htm

• **ODOT District 5** (within Lane County): Roadside herbicide nighttime spraying scheduled during the week of April 17 on Highway 126 East, and on Highway 58, weather permitting. ODOT District 5 IVM Coordinator Dennis Joll: 686-7526; daily spray information: (888) 996-8080.

— *Compiled by Jan Wroncy, Forestland Dwellers: 342-8332*

for schools and local government services such as cops and firefighters.

— *Alan Pittman*

PARTICLES, BIG & SMALL

Proposed EPA air quality rule changes would tighten regulations on particle pollution in 2013, but revoke national standards for coarse particle pollution (PM-10) across Oregon for the seven years until the EPA's new rules are enforced.

Large cities that have violated the 24-hour coarse particle standard over the last three years would be held to the current standard through 2013. But because no Oregon cities have recently violated the standard, coarse particle pollution would go unchecked throughout Oregon for the next seven years, said EPA spokesman John Millet. "There wasn't as much reason to [retain the current standard] in places that don't already have a problem," Millet said. "It's not like you're losing anything in reality."

Oregon Toxics Alliance Communications Chair Barbara Allen disagrees. "This rule is a Bush administration gift to industry by opening up the possibility of no emission control rules for certain areas for seven or more years," she said.

The EPA's proposed changes would lower the 24-hour fine particle standard (PM-2.5) from 65 to 35 micrograms per cubic meter while leaving the annual standard at 15 micrograms per cubic meter, despite an independent advisory committee's recommendation to lower it.

Lane Regional Air Pollution Authority Director Merlyn Hough said that the new fine particle standards might be difficult for Lane County to meet, especially in Oakridge, where high levels of fine particulates have posed short-term air quality problems. "EPA's proposed timeframes are necessarily long, but we and our partners are already well on our way and we expect to meet EPA's schedules with much room to spare," he said.

The proposed changes would also lower the 24-hour coarse particle standard from 150 to 70 micrograms per cubic meter, but revoke the annual standard nationwide. "Current sci-

Happening people BY PAUL NEEVEL



ELLEN GABEHART

Artist, teacher and Bronx native Ellen Gabehart says she started drawing at age 3, and joined the Student's Art League at 14. But her parents disapproved of art and forced her to take an office job. "They made me be a bookkeeper," she says. "I left for California at 17." Soon married with three children, Gabehart completed a degree in education with a minor in art. She taught grade school, took watercolor workshops, and often traveled on her own to draw and paint in the Southwest. On a rare trip north in the '70s she fell in love with Oregon, sold everything and moved to Gold Beach. "I started my art career at age 41," she notes, "teaching at SWOCC." Five years later, Gabehart moved to Eugene, where she has been teaching ever since in many settings. "I taught at Maude Kerns Art Center for 25 years," she says. "I've just quit - I want to spend more time on my own work." Gabehart will still teach a few classes for seniors and kids. She travels to Mexico nearly every summer to draw and paint. See two recent works this month at the New Zone Gallery, 975 Oak Alley.