

• What's the **biggest issue facing Lane County** next year? In addition to other budget woes, the federal "county payments" program, also known as the O&C Lands and the Secure Rural Schools program, is about to collapse, taking up to an \$18 million bite out of the Lane County general fund budget. Eighteen Oregon counties rely on revenues from timber harvesting on public lands and Congress stabilized that shrinking fund with the Rural Schools Act (RSA) of 2002, in effect subsidizing counties that have large tracts of land in public ownership. Why the federal subsidy? These lands benefit the entire nation but cannot be taxed for local services. The RSA is due to expire next year, and Congress adjourned without restoring the act. Anything can happen in the 110th Congress. The Bush White House is trying to divert this earmarked money to buy bombs and bullets, but it's critically needed at home for county services, local schools and forest management. The counties' share of the funds is managed by the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC), which is made up of mostly conservative county commissioners. Some of these commissioners, not unlike Bush, favor privatizing just about everything public. Don't be surprised to see a backroom AOC proposal to sell off a big chunk of the remaining O&C lands to private timber companies and speculators while the commissioners feign concern for school kids and public health clinics. Environmental and economic sustainability are not figured into this short-sighted scenario to bail out struggling counties. Hello clearcuts, roads and herbicides. Do we have a better plan? Fight to restore the RSA while we diversify and seek sustainability in our local economy so we are not so dependent on federal funds. One good step in the right direction is the Lane County Energy Round-Up with public forums starting Jan. 23 looking at local self-sufficiency in energy. Stay tuned for details.

• We're looking over Sen. **Ron Wyden's proposal** for stitching up America's bleeding health care system, and we're happy to see that just about everyone would have access to health insurance through the plan. Wyden, of course, is slapping a bandage on the festering cancer of private medical insurance. Without implementing a single-payer model or imposing serious tourniquets on the insurance industry, medical costs will continue to rise like blood pressure during the holidays. Rather than gurney through Congress a complicated new plan that's likely to strap us down for even more insurance industry profits, let's just expand Medicare over the next couple of years to cover everyone's medical butts. Private insurance can still inject us with doses of supplemental coverage. We would clap for that.

• Eugene's slogan, "**The World's Greatest City for the Arts and Outdoors,**" is back in the public eye (see News Briefs this week), and it's probably time to tweak our official urban moniker. It's inaccurate, for one thing. Cannon Beach on the northern Oregon Coast blows us out of the water when it comes to arts and the outdoors. Then there's that little town called Vancouver, B.C. Dave Houser of the Chamber had some fun, but sarcastic ideas at City Club: "Eugene: Gateway to Gateway," "Eugene: A Little Above Roseburg," "Eugene: Over Two Million Hours of Public Hearings and Going," and "Eugene: Avoiding Difficult Decisions Since 1882." The old "Emerald City" and "Track Town USA" are sounding better all the time.

• Speaking of monikers, **ideas for a nickname** for the Wayne Lyman Morse United States Courthouse (see Slant last week) are still trickling in. So far the leading contenders are The Wayne, The Can, The Sardine Can, The Steel Trap, The Silver Streak, EPCOT (Extreme Pork Costing Our Taxpayers), MayneLiner Diner, The Federal Diner, Psycho-Toaster, U.S. Trailer Court, Hogan's Hogan, The Moondoggle, Fort Hogan, The Obstacle, The Aircraft Carrier, and The Gort-House, inspired by the sci-fi film *The Day the Earth Stood Still*. Got any more good ones? Send them to editor@eugeneweekly.com

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

2006
AN EXTREMELY SUBJECTIVE AND ADMITTEDLY INCOMPLETE YEAR IN REVIEW
PART TWO: THIS TOO SHALL PASS

JUNE 20: RON SUSKIND REPORTS THAT DICK CHEMEY'S NICKNAME INSIDE THE CIA IS 'EDGAR' -- AS IN 'BERGEN'.

JULY 1: NY TIMES TRAVEL SECTION RUNS PUFF PIECE ON CHENEY AND RUMSFELD VACATION HOMES.

JULY 2: CONSERVATIVE BLOGGERS DECLARE THE ARTICLE A DELIBERATE ATTEMPT TO AID AL QAEDA ASSASSINATION SQUADS. IT'S AN ACT OF TREASON!

JULY 12: HOMELAND SECURITY LISTS LIKELY TERRORIST TARGETS SUCH AS 'OLD MCDONALD'S PETTING ZOO' AND THE 'MULE DAY PARADE.'

I HOPE THE ISLAMOFASCISTS DON'T TRY TO BEHEAD US AT THE COUNTY FAIR!

JULY 19: BILL KRISTOL SAYS IRANIANS WOULD EMBRACE A U.S. ATTACK. THEY'LL WELCOME US AS LIBERATORS!

WHAT'S SO FUNNY?

AUG. 30: MEDIA REPORTS ON PENTAGON'S 'FLAT DADDY' PROGRAM, WHICH SUPPLIES CARDBOARD CUT-OUTS OF DEPLOYED SOLDIERS TO THEIR CHILDREN. IT'S JUST LIKE HAVING DADDY HOME, IF HE WERE FLAT AND NEVER SPOKE.

SEPT. 20: BILL O'REILLY CLAIMS FBI HAS WARNED HIM HE IS ON AL QAEDA HIT LIST.

THEY'RE OUT TO GET ME-- JUST LIKE EVERYONE ELSE!

SEPT. 21: FBI DENIES ANY KNOWLEDGE OF SUCH A LIST.

SEPT. 24: N.I.E. ACKNOWLEDGES THAT IRAQ WAR HAS INCREASED THREAT OF TERRORISM. THE REPORT ALSO NOTES THAT THE POPE IS CATHOLIC AND BEARS DEFECATE IN THE WOODS.

SEPT. 28: TRENT LOTT DISPLAYS THE DEPTH OF HIS KNOWLEDGE ABOUT IRAQ. "WHY DO SUNNIS KILL SHITES? HOW DO THEY TELL THE DIFFERENCE? THEY ALL LOOK THE SAME TO ME!"

OCT. 31: SEAN HANNITY MAKES IMPRESSIVE LAST DITCH EFFORT TO RE-DEFINE ELECTION NARRATIVE. JOHN KERRY REALLY HATES THE TROOPS! A WHOLE LOT!

AND THAT'S WHAT THIS ELECTION SHOULD BE ABOUT!

NOV. 8: DEMOCRATS TROUNCE REPUBLICANS. D'OH!

NOV. 9: LEAKED FOX NEWS MEMO INSTRUCTS EMPLOYEES TO "BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR ANY STATEMENTS FROM IRAQI INSURGENTS, WHO MUST BE THRILLED AT THE PROSPECT OF A DEMOCRATIC CONGRESS."

MONTH OF DECEMBER: CONSERVATIVES ONCE AGAIN TRY TO SPOIL THE HOLIDAYS FOR EVERYONE.

YOU MEAN 'CHRISTMAS'! ONLY TERRORIST LOVERS CELEBRATE THE 'HOLIDAYS'!

...SEE YOU NEXT YEAR!

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news Briefs

FOGGY COP WATCHING

Will the police oversight that the public demanded overwhelmingly by a vote a year ago be public?

That question was left up in the air Dec. 13 when a sharply divided Eugene City Council voted to pass an ordinance implementing the police auditor and review board.

An earlier draft of the ordinance shrouded public oversight of the police in secrecy. The rules emphasized the maximum secrecy allowed by law in the review process with secret meetings, names withheld and possible confidentiality agreements by board members. The draft ordi-

nance required the supposedly independent auditor and board to comply with the police and city manager's confidentiality policies and with confidentiality requirements the police union and manager have or will agree to in labor contracts. Both the manager and union previously opposed independent police review.

At a public hearing on the ordinance, David Hinkley, a neighborhood leader, warned that the oversight "needs to be transparent" to restore trust in the police.



HAPPENIN' BIZ

SOLARC A & E

Up on the roof above their offices, architects Jan Fillinger and Galen Ohmart (left and right in the photo) and engineers Gene Johnson and Mike Hatten show off the photovoltaic array that provides a portion of their electricity. Four years ago, the four combined forces to launch Solarc Architecture and Engineering, specializing in projects that have environmental sustainability as one of the main design goals. "We're working on a couple of houses that will be completely off the grid," says Fillinger, who has incorporated energy efficiency in his work since the mid-'80s. "We're designing systems to capture stormwater from the roof to flush toilets and irrigate plants." A regional leader in the field, Solarc conducts energy audits and consults with builders and government agencies on efficiency and sustainability issues. Solarc also encourages energy efficiency among its own employees, offering reduced-price LTD passes to those who leave the car at home or up to \$50 monthly in cash to those who walk or bike to work. Learn more at www.solarc-ae.net - Paul Neevel

