

POLICE WANT MORE SHOCKERS; CITIZENS TO MEET ON TASERS

After giving its "Officer of the Year" award to a policeman who repeatedly Tasered a pesticide protester in the back while he lay face down with his arms pinned or behind him, the Eugene Police Department (EPD) wants to dramatically expand its use of the too-often deadly, 50,000-volt weapons.

Right now about half of EPD's patrol officers carry the weapon that has been linked to at least 70 deaths and hundreds of lawsuits and complaints of police abuse nationwide. The police want all patrol officers to carry Tasers.

The EPD claims that Tasers save lives. But independent studies have found that rather than being used in threatening situations as a substitute for deadly force, the dangerous shock weapons are far more often used against unthreatening minor offenders. A 2004 investigation by *The Denver Post* found that most Taser victims were not threatening and that most faced misdemeanor charges or a ticket.

Eugene police decided to arrest and Taser anti-pesticide protester Ian Van Ornum last spring rather than handing him a ticket for the misdemeanor of slowing traffic. The Taser of Van Ornum in the back was caught on police video.

Amnesty International has called for a moratorium on the use of Tasers. If police departments refuse, the human rights group has called on strictly limiting their use to clear cases of an "immediate threat of death or serious injury."

Two local citizen groups, Citizens for Public Accountability and Communities for Ethical Law Enforcement, have organized a meeting to discuss Tasers at 7 pm Thursday, May 21, at EWEB. The groups say the police have refused an invitation to attend. For more information, call 337-3229. — Alan Pittman

COUNCIL BACKS DEVELOPER SUBSIDIES; VOTE FORESHADOWS UGB EXPANSION

In what may foreshadow a future vote on expanding the city's urban growth boundary to allow more sprawl at taxpayer expense, the Eugene City Council voted 5-3 to support a state bill that subsidizes edge development.

Councilors who voted in favor of the sprawl subsidy at a time the state is slashing school days and increasing class sizes included Andrea Ortiz, Jennifer Solomon, George Poling, Mike Clark and Chris Pryor. Councilors Alan Zelenka, Betty Taylor and George Brown opposed the measure. Mayor Kitty Piercy did not take a position.

Senate Bill 719 would divert \$50 million in state lottery revenue from schools, social services and other pressing state needs to instead create a revolving loan fund for UGB expansions. The zero interest loans would be provided to local governments for infrastructure to subsidize urban sprawl. By existing state law, the finance savings would apparently have to be passed on to developers in lower systems development fees. No such subsidized zero interest loans exist for more environmentally friendly and livable compact development in city downtowns.

With the council's vote, the city will now spend taxpayer money to lobby for a taxpayer subsidy of urban sprawl. That's a reversal of a longstanding city growth management policy calling for no taxpayer subsidy of expansion. The council is now studying a local urban growth boundary expansion with key votes coming later this year.

Land speculators and developers could make huge profits from a UGB expansion while taxpayers would be forced to pay for extending roads, sewers, schools, police and fire protection and other services to development that destroys natural areas, increases traffic pollution and reduces livability.

"This seems very premature," said Councilor George Brown of the vote. "This is setting the table for a feast that has yet to occur."

But Councilor George Poling called the subsidy a "valuable tool."

Councilor Zelenka pointed at the state's huge budget shortfall. "Where would this money come from?" — Alan Pittman

Lane Area Herbicide Spray Schedule

• ODOT will spray **Hwy. 126** west from Eugene to Florence tentatively on May 18, Highway 101 on May 19, Territorial from Veneta to Monroe, and Highway 36 from Mapleton to Deadwood on May 20. Call Don Angermayer at 736-2841 and/or call the Herbicide Application 1-888-996-8080.

• **Gypsy moth spraying** (southeast Eugene): The last tentative spray date is May 19. Aerial spraying was conducted on April 30 and May 8. Health effects and social disruptions caused by the spraying are being collected and documented. Contact Lisa Warnes, vice-president of the Southeast Neighbors Association, at 484-2210.

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news Briefs

TWO-WHEELED PROCESSION

Eugene will join communities around the world in holding the annual Ride of Silence at 6:30 pm Wednesday, May 20, beginning at the EMU Amphitheater at the UO. The ride "honors the memory of bicyclists who have been killed or seriously injured by motor vehicles and also to promote the concept that all road users, bicyclists, walkers, runners and drivers must share the road and take responsibility for safety," according to Richard Hughes, one of the organizers.

The short, slow-paced ride is open to cyclists of all ages and abilities. "It is neither a race nor a party," says Hughes. "Its character will be more like a funeral procession as cyclists who have died are remembered."

Riders are encouraged to wear armbands — black in memory of a cyclist who has been killed, or red to indicate that the rider has been injured — as they pedal in single-file through the streets of Eugene.

The route will go along 13th and 18th Avenues, Willamette Street and 5th Avenue and will end at EWEB Plaza. Helmets are required.

For more information, visit www.rideof-silence.com or www.eugenegears.org

HEMP BILL IN SALEM

A proposed Oregon Senate bill would allow production and possession of industrial hemp in the state.

Sen. Dave Nelson (R-Pendleton) and Sen. Floyd Prozanski (D-Eugene) are sponsors of Senate Bill 676, which would commercialize hemp as a viable alternative trade crop. The bill authorizes the Oregon Department of Agriculture to license and inspect permitted growers and handlers. This is the first such bill to make it out of committee.

Only cannabis sativa plants distinct from

the cultivation of marijuana can grow; any crop found to exceed 1 percent dry weight tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) concentration may be seized and the farmer penalized. Any counterfeit or controlled substances are strictly forbidden.

All growers and handlers must obtain an industrial hemp license and keep records susceptible to audit.

Hemp production would result in licensing and service fees, as well as a new economic industry for the state. The plant can create cordage, textiles, paper and composite wood. In a 1998 bulletin, Oregon State University noted hemp's economic feasibility for high potential yields but said crops would require substantial irrigation and innovation in harvesting equipment.

Since 1997, five hemp farming bills have died in Senate and House committees. Other states such as Minnesota, New Hampshire and New Mexico currently have bills similar to 676 on the floor.

A public hearing on the bill was scheduled in Salem May 13. Track bills at www.leg.state.or.us/searchmeas.html

— Sachie Yorck

COUNTRY FAIR IS JULY 10-12

The summer's premier counter-culture event, drawing people from all over the civilized world (and perhaps beyond) will be July 10-12 at the fair site near Veneta. This year's "party with a purpose" will feature 17 stages of entertainment, nearly 80 food booths and hundreds of craft booths.

Tickets for the 40th anniversary Oregon Country Fair (OCF) are now on sale at TicketsWest outlets, TicketsWest.com and other retail centers throughout the Northwest. All tickets must be purchased off-site; no tickets will be sold at the fair site.

Confirmed entertainers and presenters represent a wide array of musical genres and sensibilities. The diverse lineup "reflects the history and evolution of the fair and the broad array of fair participants since the event first began as a benefit for an alternative school in 1969," according to a press release.

In addition to the entertainment on stage, wandering musicians, face painters, circus acts and many other fair favorites will be back. BK3 (featuring Bill Kreutzmann, Scott Murawski and Hutch Hutchinson), Chicago Afrobeat Project, The Gourds,