

UNEMPLOYED CRIMINALS

Will local crime go up with the economy down?

No, according to a study last month by the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission.

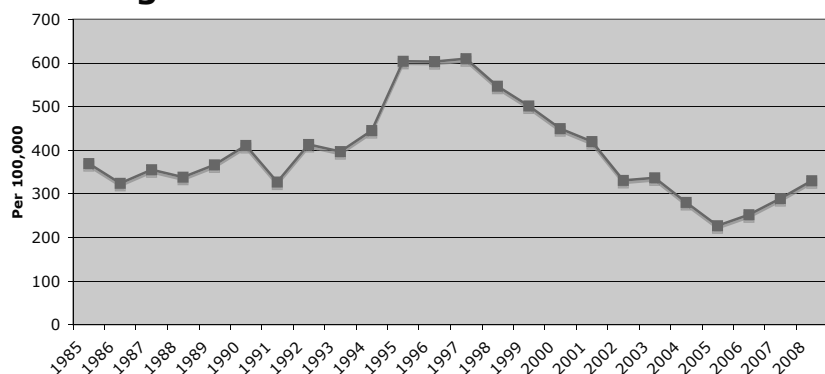
The "Lane County Criminal Justice Report" analyzed Lane County crime rates compared to unemployment rates since 1990. "We saw no relationship," the researchers wrote. The report noted that the finding is consistent with other studies done elsewhere: "Research has not shown that the unemployment rate is a determinant of crime rates."

Since 1997, the violent crime rate has fallen 46 percent in Eugene and the property crime rate has fallen 30 percent, according to FBI data.

But from 2007 to 2008, the violent crime rate increased 14 percent, and the property crime rate increased 23 percent. Two thirds of the increase in violent crime was due to more robberies and about a third due to an increase in aggravated assaults, based on police reporting. Almost all the increase in property crime was due to an increase in reports of larceny-theft.

Even with the increase last year, Eugene's crime rates remain far below their historic highs. With two murders last year, Eugene is one of the safest cities in the nation. — Alan Pittman

Eugene Violent Crime Down in Decade



UNINSURED TO TAKE HIT IN BIRTHING COSTS

The decision by PeaceHealth to shut down its Birth Center for nearly a year will create an additional \$4,600 burden for uninsured pregnant families who will need to have their babies in the hospital, or seek the services of midwives at home. The news came at a meeting of PeaceHealth officials and members of the Lane County Friends of the Birth Center (FBC) June 10.

The FBC asked PeaceHealth to "find a way to honor cost estimates provided to expecting families who, in good faith, selected the Birth Center with the stated preference of an out-of-hospital birth," according to FBC's report on the meeting that was closed to the media. But the hospital only suggested that women call Patient Financial Services and said "charity care and payment plans" were available.

An unidentified pregnant woman at the meeting was quoted on the FBC blog saying, "I'm not asking for any handouts. I'm simply asking that I be charged the price I was quoted when I chose this service."

PeaceHealth officials at the meeting did say the current Birth Center would remain open an extra week, providing services through July 8, rebids on the new construction could lower the cost and provide resources for restoring facility features that had been cut, and the hospital is hopeful that construction could begin early and go quickly.

The hospital is also expanding the number of nurses trained in midwifery, and plans to add to its prenatal education program.

In a statement prepared for the meeting, PeaceHealth said the estimated costs for a normal midwife-attended birth in the hospital is \$10,700, including \$6,600 in hospital charges. By comparison, the cost at the Birth Center is about \$6,100.

Why were pregnant families not given more notice? PeaceHealth said it was a "combination of factors," including the hospital's failed efforts to find an affordable interim out-of-hospital facility, the "unpredictable nature of a complex, ongoing real estate negotiation," and the Birth Center building's new owners not willing to lease back the building during the interim.

Groundbreaking is planned July 13 at the new Springfield site near RiverBend, and construction is expected to last for nine to 10 months. — Ted Taylor

Lane Area Herbicide Spray Schedule

• **Gypsy moth spraying** (southeast Eugene): If you or your family members were sickened, your property contaminated, or you feel your rights were violated by the forced exposure to the Oregon Department of Agriculture's aerial spraying of the biological (and chemical) insecticide FORAY 48B during April and May, you need to file a "Report of Loss" form no later than Friday, June 26, in order to preserve your right to recover damages. For forms and information, go to forestlanddwellers.org/News/GypsyMothSpray/ and for assistance contact Lisa Warnes, VP of the SE Neighbors Association, at 484-2210.

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David and Mo Young represent people from a mix of racial and ethnic backgrounds

news Briefs

DIVERSITY PHOTO EXHIBIT ON DISPLAY

A photo exhibit of 25 people representing the ethnic and racial diversity of Lane County, including a transgender woman, drew criticism from a few parents when it was displayed in Eugene public schools this spring, but the "Shared Community, Mixed Identities" exhibit is now on prominent display at the Lane County Courthouse.

To highlight and celebrate the multifaceted experiences of county residents, Lane County Commissioner Rob Handy will be hosting a social gathering from noon to 1:30 pm Wednesday, June 24, in the lobby of the courthouse.

The social gathering will draw attention to CALC's photo exhibit on display inside the Wayne Morse Plaza entrance to the courthouse. The traveling exhibit was reserved by the Lane County Diversity Action Committee.

"As a leader in the community I feel it's my duty to publicly acknowledge this wonderful exhibit which demonstrates what a truly unique and special community Lane County is," Handy says. "I applaud the work of CALC and the individuals featured in the exhibit in the endeavor to educate our fellow community members about the importance of accep-

tance and respect for diversity."

The purpose of the exhibit is to counter stereotyping by helping people recognize there are many different experiences in Lane County, and it encourages people to be more accepting of their neighbors, co-workers and classmates. The exhibit is comprised of a wide range of subjects across race, ethnicity, age, gender identity, geographic location, socioeconomic status and sexual orientation.

The exhibit is part of a series, including "We Are Neighbors" and "What Does Family Look Like?" recognizing immigrant neighbors and family diversity. For more information or to book any of these exhibits, call CALC at 485-1755 or visit www.calclane.org

SUMMER IS 'NICE' TIME

The city of Eugene, Lane County, local utilities, LCC, HACSA, and students from the UO and LCC are teaming up with community members this summer to support energy conservation and efficiency, renewable energy projects and efforts to lower our area's carbon footprint. The program is called Northwest Institute for Community Energy (NICE).

