

## TREES AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE

Those trees lining the streets of Eugene are more than just urban decoration. They could help the city deal with climate change. Friends of Trees (FOT) is an organization that brings people together to plant and care for trees and green spaces. The group hopes to begin a community-wide conversation about creating a resilient urban canopy to help mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change. This will be the topic of discussion at an event, "Trees for Eugene and Springfield's 21st Century Urban Forest," hosted by FOT and the city of Eugene's Office of Sustainability. The event will be from 7 to 9 pm Friday, Sept. 14, at the Atrium Building's Sloat Room, 99 W. 10th Ave.

"We don't really know what the change is going to be," says Erik Burke, director of the FOT Eugene-Springfield chapter. He says some studies predict the local climate to eventually be more like that of Sacramento, but nothing is definite. "Most of us don't know that much yet. We don't know what the models are, we don't know what we should be doing, so we're trying to get people together to think about this," Burke says.

The event will feature talks from guest speakers Jim Gersbach and Kris Day of the Portland-based group Tomorrow's Urban Forest. Gersbach, a longtime FOT volunteer, will speak about the importance of hardy, drought-tolerant trees in cities' response to climate change. Day, an FOT staffer, will focus on the need for experimentation and monitoring of climate-appropriate trees.

"If you're interested in trees, vegetation, climate change and the health of our city and our urban forest I think it will be a really interesting discussion," Burke says, "I'm hoping it leads to moving us forward in taking better care of our urban forest."

See [friendsoftrees.org](http://friendsoftrees.org) for more information.

— Shelley Deadmond

## RECORDS REQUEST A LONG TIME COMING

The Eugene City Council is readying for another public forum on the Downtown Public Safety Zone, often called the downtown exclusion zone, in advance of an Oct. 8 vote on whether to renew it. Occupy Eugene police liaisons and attorney Lauren Regan of the Civil Liberties Defense Center say the Eugene Police Department stonewalled their public records request until the last minute. Now the EPD is suggesting that the city pay \$15,000 for legal representation for the accused rather than do away with the exclusion ordinance. The council could renew the law or allow it to expire on its sunset date, Nov. 30.

Jean Stacey says she and fellow Occupy Eugene police liaison Michael Carrigan went directly to EPD Chief Pete Kerns in April 2012 after police representatives responded to attempts to get public records beginning in fall 2011 with incomplete information. "The only way we knew it was incomplete was because we had taken photographs of tickets that had been issued that were not on the report," Stacey says.

Kerns agreed to appoint a police liaison to help acquire the records "in a way that is timely, contextual and responsive," Stacey says. But while Stacey says Occupy submitted an official records request in April, she says the request was lost at least twice and not turned in until June 8. Stacey says that three months after she submitted the request, an EPD records representative told her that the request could not be addressed until she provided the EPD records representative with the boundaries of the DPSZ and the date it began.

A representative for EPD responded to a request for comment with a written statement, which says, "We routinely respond to public records requests with a well-established process. Eugene Police Department received a request on April 14, 2012, that did not go through this process, but was instead made to the chief, who does not handle public records requests. Two weeks later, the chief assigned an EPD staff member to be the designated point

of contact for any public records requests from OE." The statement goes on to say that Occupy representatives were at times unavailable and that there was further delay until a fee waiver was completed. The statement continues, "Due to the time lag in OE providing the supportive data for the fee waiver request, the data was stale and had to be regenerated so that it was accurate. The documents were emailed to OE on Sept. 7."

Regan of the CLDC says the difficulty of acquiring the records is a travesty to the public process because the public records act is supposed to be easily used by citizens in a timely fashion, "and when they are completely toolled from using that process so that they have to rely on a lawyer to get involved in order to coerce the records out of the public agency, that too is just a total breach of public trust and is a total violation of the Oregon public records act."

Regan and Stacey are calling on the council to refuse to vote on the DPSZ until they are able to analyze the data. Without complete data, Stacey says, any discussions that the councilors have are "blind discussions."

Regan says that 5 pm on a Friday before a Monday, Sept. 10, council work session is not enough time to perform an adequate analysis of the data. "It's hundreds of pages of stuff. It's literally put in some search terms into a

computer program and hit enter," Regan says. "There's no reason that that couldn't have been done five months ago."

Stacey says the lack of presentation of the voided exclusion requests making up 35 percent of the data and the use of "storytelling" after councilors requested data "make one very curious" about the delayed disclosure.

"It just seems like a set-up — it just sounds like an absolute circumvention of any kind of public participation in this process and it clearly smacks of the EPD having significant reason to be hiding the facts that are underlying the DPSZ data," Regan says.

The council public hearing on the DPSZ is at 7:30 pm Monday, Sept. 17, in the Public Library's Bascom-Tyson Room. — Shannon Finnell

## LIGHTEN UP

The cause of our current unpleasantness: deregulation followed by tax cuts. Romney's formula for change: tax cuts followed by deregulation.

BY RAFAEL ALDAVE

## RABBIT RESCUE SEEKS TO STOP SCRAMBLE

This summer's "animal scramble" at the Cottage Grove Rodeo appalled animal lovers, who say the rabbits used in the event can be hurt or even killed. The Cottage Grove Riding Club, which puts on the scramble, said at a Sept. 10 board meeting that the event prevents the rabbits from being slaughtered for meat.

Heather Crippen and her daughter Alex, who founded and run Red Barn Rabbit Rescue in Creswell, have been working to stop the animal scramble, which was held July 14. Heather Crippen says they initially looked into working to make the event more rabbit-friendly, but "it's just not an appropriate situation for a rabbit to be in." The Crippens' video of the event shows bunnies being dumped out of a trailer, a rabbit being flung through the air and rows of screaming children bearing down on a cluster of bunnies paralyzed with fear.

Red Barn Rabbit Rescue sent letters to the board members of the Cottage Grove Riding Club, but did not get any response, Heather Crippen says. She worries that angry and threatening messages the riding club received from some animal advocates not associated with Red Barn might have made starting a dialogue more difficult. Crippen and Scott Beckstead, Oregon director for the Humane Society of the United States, met with Lane County Commissioner Faye Stewart to discuss their concerns about the animal scramble. Crippen says the stress of being thrown from a horse trailer and chased and grabbed by screaming children is enough to kill a rabbit. New rabbit owners might not recognize the symptoms in time, she says. The riding club, which has not responded to a request for comment, said at its board meeting that it gives the children a care sheet.

Stewart is not in favor of a county ordinance against such events, but met with a representative of the riding club to discuss Red Barn and the Humane Society's concerns, Crippen says. When the riding club did not respond to a request for a neutral meeting through Stewart, Heather, Alex and Dillon Crippen (who took notes) came to the board meeting. Stewart says, "I was emailed by one of the riding club members last night and they said they heard from Red Barn Rabbit Rescue and that they were going to try to work out an agreement."

Red Barn and the Cottage Grove Humane Society offered to raise the money to hide \$100 bills in three eggs and then mix them in with other plastic eggs for kids to hunt in an "egg scramble," but Crippen says the riding club was not interested in the offer. The club said at the meeting that it's the Cottage Grove community that wants the scramble and that rodeo profits triple when the event is scheduled. Crippen says she has asked the riding club to give her the exact numbers of people who leave the rodeo if the event is not scheduled,

and she will raise the money to pay the club the amount it would cost them to not have the event. Alex Crippen noted that if the riding club were to switch to another event, like the egg scramble, then all the kids whose parents won't let them participate because they are not allowed to have a pet rabbit could be in the event, and, Heather Crippen says, some of those kids go home with \$100 instead of a 10-year commitment to taking care of a rabbit.

Crippen says she has also spoken with Commissioner Pete Sorenson and state Sen. Floyd Prozanski, who have expressed support for the efforts to stop the animal cruelty. Crippen says she intends to keep a dialogue open with the riding club and hopes members of the Cottage Grove community who like the rodeo but do not condone the cruelty to the rabbits will speak up as well.

— Camilla Mortensen

