

state/national government needs to heed the organic intent of apportionment: taxation = representation + public service.

Lane County is part of the congressional district that receives taxes from around 700,000 people. This money needs to be used to upgrade and extend existing rails tracking across the county to provide county-to-county mass transportation.

Public agencies, such as LTD, competing for federal subsidies will result in local over-development, or more than likely, a squandering away of subsidy payments within multiple layers of government.

Jon Meadow
Eugene

VOTERS BEWARE

American voting in the presidential election need to know who Mitt Romney is and what his “business success” is really all about. A brief historical view of Romney’s business dealings with Bain Capital expose a highly predatory and corrupt model of business.

Basically it is the leveraged buyout tactic wherein large amounts of money are borrowed to buy controlling interest in a firm, after which the firm becomes liable for the loans used for its takeover. This would then drive the companies into bankruptcy destroying thousands of jobs and pensions while Bain and Romney made off with hundreds of millions of dollars.

Here’s a partial list as compiled in the recent expose in *Rolling Stone* magazine, “Greed and Debt: The True Story of Mitt Romney and Bain Capital.”

- Ampad — Bain borrowed \$60 million to purchase the company after only investing \$5 million of its own money. The company went bankrupt throwing hundreds out of work. Bain and Romney made \$100 million on a \$5 million investment.

- KB Toys — Bain borrowed \$300 million gaining control of the company [and] driving the company into bankruptcy. Jobless employees got no severance pay. Bain made off with \$120 million.

- Stage Stores — same model as above. Bain got “a \$175 million return on its initial

investment of \$10 million.” Employees and firm left in ruins.

So voters beware. This is Romney’s predatory economic model and it would surely leave this country’s 99 percent in economic ruins.

Gerry Rempel
National Delegate to DNC
Eugene

LETTERS POLICY: We welcome letters on all topics and will print as many as space allows, with priority given to timely local issues. Please limit length to 200 words, keep submissions to once a month, and include your address and phone number for our files. Email to letters@eugeneweekly.com or fax to 484-4044, or mail to 1251 Lincoln, Eugene 97401.

Some people need help recovering

Once again we are seeing more than a thousand homes lost to a hurricane in Louisiana. This time around, some wise investments in infrastructure saved New Orleans, but what happens to those outside the new levee systems who have lost their homes? Americans are remarkably generous to these storm victims, but many are less generous to the victims of the economic storm.

In Eugene alone more than 2,000 people have lost their homes because of the economic collapse. Is there a plan to save them? When Occupy Eugene (OE) started, its participants exposed the plight of the homeless. When OE offered safe refuge, it placed people from all walks of life in close proximity to the hundreds of homeless helped, and we learned that most of the homeless are articulate, decent human beings. They are the same as us, and they deserve the right to sleep in safety.

Opportunity Village is the first installment of a plan put together by many of the most experienced and knowledgeable homeless advocates in the city, including many from OE. The first stage would help the most vulnerable: the families with children who should be in stable neighborhoods near the schools they attend. The Opportunity Village study group determined that the ideal site would be near the urban center, near bike and bus transportation, would have access to utilities and would be a safe and secure location positioned near supportive neighbors. The City Council is going to look at various potential sites and will meet again this fall to discuss the best location. If this pilot is successful we should set up additional villages in other locations and in vacant buildings to provide the opportunity for hundreds of others to get back on their feet again. This is a wise investment in our community’s future.

The victims of both the hurricanes and the economic storm will need help to get going again. Don’t we have the same moral obligation to invest a small amount to provide a safe and sanitary place for the homeless to sleep? If done correctly, the right plan will improve the city and also save money.

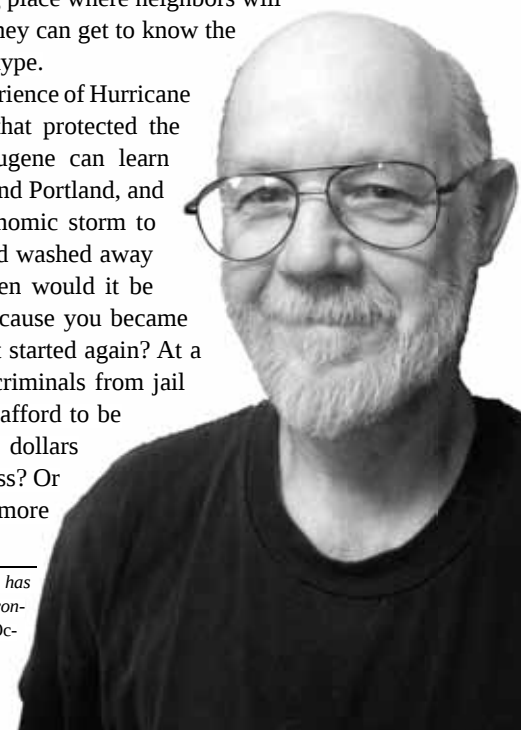
Los Angeles County has about 51,000 homeless on any given night. The county invested in a pilot project called Project 50 that provides permanent housing for 50 of the most vulnerable to help them break their cycle of dependence and reenter society. This investment resulted in a savings for the county of \$120,000 a year. Project 50 supporters are advocates of the

so-called housing-first approach, who say a permanent roof provides the stability chronically homeless people need to get their lives back on track. It helps to have an address to look for a job.

In August, about 200 people met at the Unitarian Universalist Church to learn about Opportunity Village Eugene and to listen to Mark Lakeman give a presentation about Dignity Village, which provides shelter for about 150 in Portland. The villagers there created their own cute structures from recycled or donated materials. It only costs the residents about \$3 a night per person and they provide those funds, so it doesn’t cost the city anything but the use of the land. Lakeman believes that being a member of a village is critical to being able to transition to a more stable situation. Villagers need to have an attractive location with a gathering place where neighbors will feel comfortable coming to visit, so they can get to know the real people rather than fear the stereotype.

New Orleans learned from the experience of Hurricane Katrina and made the investments that protected the residents from this latest storm. Eugene can learn from the experience of Los Angeles and Portland, and invest in helping victims of the economic storm to regain their footing. If your home had washed away or been destroyed in a forest fire then would it be any worse than losing your home because you became ill? What help would you need to get started again? At a time when we are releasing violent criminals from jail because of budget problems, can we afford to be spending hundreds of thousands of dollars having the police rousting the homeless? Or should we invest in making the city more livable for all?

Jerry Brule has lived in many Western states and has experience in teaching, engineering, welding and construction. He is retired and writing for the Eugene Occupier and other publications.

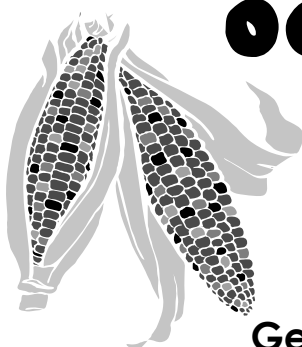


BY JERRY BRULE
MIC CHECK!

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