



Too many cohousing projects in the works? Oakleigh Meadow, a cohousing community planned along the Willamette River in north Eugene, is making progress on city approvals and hopes to break ground soon, but home sites are still available. Until Oakleigh sells out, we probably won't see much happen at an earlier cohousing site — the big empty lot at the corner of Lincoln and 11th Avenue. Attorney Martin Henner owns the Lincoln property and actually had a groundbreaking ceremony for cohousing apartments in October 2007, and then the economy tanked. Henner was also having trouble at the time getting MUPT tax breaks to make the project pencil out with affordable units. He tells us McCamant & Durrett Architects of California is now interested in buying the property to build a senior cohousing community. Charles Durrett is the consultant for Oakleigh and "they have asked that he not get involved with another local venture" until Oakleigh is full, Henner says. The husband and wife team of McCamant & Durrett literally wrote the book on cohousing, and they design and consult worldwide on sustainable projects.

The **Whiteaker Block Party** was a big success this year, and while it was free to attend, it was not free to put on. It cost around \$20,000 for building the music stages, city police and fire marshal services and several thousand more in miscellaneous costs. Musicians and performers donated their talents and hundreds of volunteers helped out. "This year the total was around \$23,000 in [Ninkasi] sponsorship to keep the party a free event," says Nikos Ridge, CEO of Ninkasi, the major sponsor. "Big Green events also helped the Block Party to make about \$10,000 in profit from beer sales at the event."

National Bee Day is Saturday, Aug. 17, and the Eugene-based nonprofit Beyond Toxics will be asking help from grocers to raise awareness about the plight of our honeybees. "We will be asking grocery stores around Oregon to temporarily remove or cover (for a short window of time) the produce that would be directly affected by the loss of pollinators (like the honeybee) that do the work needed to pollinate the wide variety of fruit, nuts and seeds we take for granted," says Lisa Arkin of Beyond Toxics. See nationalhoneybeeday.com or beyondtoxics.org.

BEST (Better Eugene-Springfield Transit) was formed to support expansion of LTD's EmX system and future green projects that enhance walking, biking and mass transit in our metro area. BEST got notice this week of a \$5,000 Local Transit Coalition Grant from the American Public Transportation Association. The money will go to support advocacy activities. "We'll be forming our new outreach committee and looking at hiring an intern or some kid of support staff," says Rob Zako of BEST.

A new **produce stand** opened Aug. 9 at the corner of Rainbow and Centennial in Springfield and will be open from 4 to 6 pm Fridays until late fall. The stand is a collaboration between the Lane Coalition for Healthy Active Youth, the Willamette Farm and Food Coalition, Dari Mart, the Healthy Corner Stores project and Telltale Farm in Junction City.

The nonprofit **Kairos Agency** based in Grants Pass has expanded its services into Eugene with a new treatment home for five residents. The nonprofit has provided services for youth and young adults with mental and behavioral disorders and their families for the past 35 years. Until last year Kairos was known as the Southern Oregon Adolescent Study and Treatment Center. See kairosnw.org for more information.

The **NAACP of Eugene and Springfield** is sponsoring a training on "Connection Compassionately: An Introduction to Nonviolent Communication" from 9:30 am to 4:30 pm Saturday, Aug. 17, at the Jazz Station, 124 W. Broadway. Fee is \$50 but no one will be turned away for lack of funds. Trainer is Gary Baran. Email president@naacplanecounty.org or call 484-1119.

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more successful, the better for Womenspace.

Admission is \$20 on site including one food/drink ticket and an entry into the raffle. Tickets and food and drink ticket bundles can be purchased at discounted prices online on dishcrawl.com/downtownnf. Check in between 1:30 and 4 pm at Lane County Circuit Court next to the Saturday Market's information booth and explore downtown Eugene culinary spots for an entire afternoon. — *Laetitia Béraud*

SMALL FARMS VS. GMOS AND CANOLA

Efforts in Oregon to protect small farmers and organic growers are coming from the ground up at the county and state level these days. An initiative to ban genetically modified (GM) crops in Lane County has been resubmitted to the county clerk, and small farmers came out ahead in the Oregon Legislature this session.

"By and large [the Oregon Legislature] did a very good job standing up for family farm values this legislative session," says Ivan Maluski, the policy director of advocacy group Friends of Family Farmers (FFF). Among the changes was the creation of Aggie Bonds (small farmer and rancher loans) under the Oregon Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Program established in HB 2700 and a ban on commercial canola production inside the Willamette Valley protected district established in HB 2427.

Opponents of genetically modified (GM) crops and of canola in Oregon are primarily concerned with increased pesticide use and unwanted cross-pollination ruining local

organic crops and also with GM crops causing unintentional patent infringement and having possible negative health effects.

The biggest threat to the efforts to create bans on GM crops in Lane, Benton and Jackson counties died this session. SB 633, which would have shifted regulation of seeds from the hands of local governments to the hands of the state government, died in the House on July 8. Pro-pesticide group Oregonians for Food and Shelter (OFS) was a primary supporter of SB 633.

In response to the GM ban initiatives, Scott Dahlman, executive director of OFS, says, "Efforts by local activists seek to undermine farmers' right to decide for themselves how they farm and what they grow. Many farmers already cooperate with neighbors toward their common success."

Lane County's ban initiative, like Benton's, was said to not comply with the single-subject rule for petitions, but Ann Kneeland, a lawyer with Support Local Food Rights, says, "Chief petitioners from both counties have worked to carefully craft the initiative to comply with the single-subject rule." The petition in Jackson County was accepted to the ballot as a full ban on any genetically modified food.

According to Kneeland, the Lane County initiative covered four subjects: the rights of natural community, the right to self-government, the provisions of corporate rights and seed patents. "All of those essential components of our local economy stand to gain from this initiative," she says. A petition to reconsider the rejection of the initiative was filed on July 15, but Kneeland says a decision won't be made on the initiative until September. — *Jordan Tichenor*

JOANN ERNST TO STAND FOR EAST LANE COMMISH

Joann Ernst has had a turbulent career; but turbulent or not, she has proven she can stand her ground. Now, she's entering the fray for the East Lane County Commissioner race to change the perception of civic engagement in the county. "I think Lane County has lost the trust of the people because they don't seem to have a voice. I'd like to bring that voice back," Ernst says. Kevin Matthews and Jose Ortal have also indicated they will file for the May 2014 primary.

Ernst has been a vocal opponent of moves to expand forestry, most notably in her protest of proposed old-growth logging by Seneca Jones Timber, which also owns the controversial west Eugene biomass burning plant. "Cutting down trees doesn't solve anything. I'm taking a couple of steps back and looking at why [the county] needs that revenue in the first place," Ernst says.

Her stand on logging nearly cost her the EWEB commissioner position, which was also threatened shortly after her arrest for marijuana possession — she was given probation and told the judge at the time that the pot was for medicinal purposes and that she had later obtained an Oregon Medical Marijuana card. The judge ordered the police to return her grow equipment.

When asked repeatedly to consider a resignation, she maintained her post and even went on to win an excessive force lawsuit against the city of

Eugene related to a violent police raid of her home.

Asked if the arrest would hurt her campaign, Ernst says, "I don't think it will hurt me. That trouble happened in my home because I have a son who deals with addictive issues. He's clean now, but it made me relatable to people here. This is a problem we have, and how do we help?"

Ernst was recently redistricted into incumbent Faye Stewart's district. Stewart has been the focus of much criticism for issues such as the destruction of Parvin Butte, the push for water rights on the McKenzie River by the McDougal Bros., and the rezoning and revamping of Goshen. In particular, Stewart's ongoing support for an unfettered forest industry has been a heated issue.

Ernst says she wants to look at boosting other local industries, pointing out that with the amount of hazelnut production here, the county could benefit from a hazelnut processing plant. "Why do we ship all of our hazelnuts out of state?" she asks.

Ernst has more than just EWEB experience under her belt. She is currently a member of the Lane Council of Government Budget Committee and has been for the last three years, and she has served on such committees as the Solid Waste Advisory Committee. She has a Facebook page at wkly.ws/1j4. — *Jordan Tichenor*



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- JOANN ERNST