



Rental owners in Eugene can take advantage of EWEB's renewed zero-interest loans and rebates for ductless heat pumps and other upgrades. A lot of older rental units have electric ceiling heat, baseboard heat or wall units that suck a lot of juice. Renters usually get stuck with the high EWEB bills, but we know some rental owners who approached their tenants and asked them if they would be willing to pay more rent in exchange for cheaper, better heat and air conditioning. The deal can pencil out well and add property value. Former EWEB commissioner Bob Cassidy wanted EWEB to make this a more formal program years ago with active outreach to both renters and rental owners. It's starting to happen with a mailing that went out to rental owners recently. Check out eweb.org/saveenergy/rental or call 685-7199.

"Building Bridges Between Business and Education" is the topic at City Club of Eugene at noon Friday, Jan. 24, at the Downtown Athletic Club, 10th and Willamette. Speakers include Robin Scott of the Lane Workforce Partnership, Kim Thompson of the Oregon Employment Department, Bob Halligan of Willamette Valley Company and Laurel Henry and Eric Cullendar of South Lane School District. See cityclubofeugene.org or call 485-7433.

The **Red Lion Hotel** on Coburg Road will be closing after 51 years, and a farewell party is planned from 6 to 9 pm Friday, Jan. 24, followed by karaoke up to closing time. The Red Lion's lounge has been a party and karaoke scene for years. Natural Grocers by Vitamin Cottage, a Colorado-based natural and organic food store, has leased the 3.5 commercial acres from the Hewitt family and plans to redevelop the site. The chain also has a store in Corvallis.

The ninth annual **Good Earth Home, Garden & Living Show** is coming up this weekend with doors opening for the three-day show at 5 pm Friday, Jan. 24, at the Fairgrounds. Exhibitors have been moving in and setting up since Tuesday. Donations at the show for programs aiding families recovering from disaster will be matched up to \$10,000 by ShelterBox USA. Call Berg Productions at 484-9247 or visit eugenehomeshow.com for more information.

We hear another **tobacco and vapor shop** opened in Eugene earlier this month. Cascade Tobacco & Vapors at 1410 W. 7th Ave. offers all-natural tobacco, e-cigarettes, e-juice (the liquid used in vaporizers) and accessories. Hours are 9 am to 6 pm Monday through Saturday. Call 515-6089.

Catholic Community Services has launched its annual **Winter Clothing Drive**, which runs Jan. 15 through Feb. 17. Donations of winter coats, socks, mittens, hats, blankets, linens and shoes will be distributed free by CCS to homeless and low-income families at its community service centers in Eugene and Springfield. Collection boxes have been set up at more than 30 area churches and organizations, and any business or organization can participate by setting out a collection box. The clothing drive also accepts cash, which will be used to purchase winter clothing for those in need of assistance. Visit ccslc.org to make a donation.

SmartUps at the Pub will meet from 5 to 7 pm Thursday, Jan. 30, at the Oregon Electric Station, 27 E. 5th Ave. Speakers will include Doug Porter of designPORT and David Schroeder of RelianceCM on the topic, "Prototype, Design & Commercialize." See eugenechamber.com for registration. The next meeting will be Feb. 27.

NEWS

TRANS PROTECTIONS TO GO BEFORE CITY COUNCIL

More than 40 percent of people who are transgender have attempted suicide, and about 80 percent have considered it. The attempt rate is 1.6 percent for the general population, and mental health experts say ongoing discrimination is one contributor to the large disparity. On Monday, Jan. 27, the Eugene City Council is scheduled to vote on amending the city code and adding gender identity to the definition of sexual orientation. The amendment applies to protections against discrimination in areas such as employment, housing and public accommodation.

"For those of us that do legal and medical advocacy, this is very important in case we need to go to court to support our clients," says Allison Cleveland of the Oregon Anti-Violence Project. "This will help people form their policies and protocols and know where they stand."

She adds that the amendment will help agencies make consistent policies and protocols and send a positive message to people who live in or pass through Eugene. "People deserve safety."

Employment status has a significant impact on transgender people's likelihood of having attempted suicide, according to a 2009 survey by the National Center for Transgender Equality and the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force. The study found that attempt rates rose for people who lost a job because of bias, were harassed or bullied in school or were assaulted physically



PHOTO: TODD COOPER

WILL EUGENE SAVE THE UNHOUSED OF WHOVILLE?

All the Whos down in Whoville are hoping the city of Eugene's heart grows a couple sizes very soon. The city has posted notices that the site of the homeless protest camp at Hilyard and Broadway is no longer open for public use and it will "clear and clean the site," according to a press release that went out to the media before the campers themselves were notified, a move Alley Valkyrie of the Nightingale Public Advocacy Collective called "disrespectful and dehumanizing."

Valkyrie questions the legality of shutting down the public property, but Mia Cariaga of the Eugene city manager's office writes in an email that the property "is not open for public use of any kind."

Advocate Mary Broadhurst says that contrary to the perception she's heard from City Manager Jon Ruiz, Eugene community members are very supportive of the camp, which has allowed many of the chronically unhoused, some with substance abuse and mental health issues, to have shelter and help one another. Ruiz is "rubbing shoulders with the country club set," Broadhurst says, who are the ones who want the unhoused out of sight.

Sue Sierralupe of Occupy Medical, which also opposes closing the camp, says, "Whoville exists because people support it. The bathrooms, the handwashing station, the food, the tents, the blankets, the medical supplies all exist because our citizens support it."

Occupy Medical says that "eviction of Whoville will only increase the risk of exposure and transmission of illnesses

that have been otherwise successfully prevented or treated with our partnership," and the free medical care group says that it has treated everything from the flu, including H1N1, to skin conditions.

Community donations have funded two portable toilets and a handwashing station at the site. Valkyrie says those toilets mean 1,500 pounds of poop are not winding up downtown. Broadhurst says that donations are not just in the form of money; people have spontaneously dropped off wood and have filled propane tanks for the warming tent. One incident that has gotten national attention is when 10-year-old Keegan Keppner, who has terminal cancer, recently came down to Whoville to provide breakfast for the unhoused campers.

Broadhurst and Valkyrie say they are frustrated with media reports, based on the city's press release, that indicate there is somewhere for Whovillians to go. The city cites expanded car camping, Opportunity Village and a rest-stop pilot program, but Broadhurst says while the community has made efforts to house those in need there are not enough beds for even a third of the area's homeless. She says contrary to the idea that providing housing for the homeless will attract more homeless, "94 percent of the unhoused are local folks."

None of the available beds, she adds, are what are called "wet beds," which she calls "a terrible, demeaning name for shelters for folks still using alcohol or drugs, including those who are addicted." She adds, "It's a disability, not a character flaw."

The city manager's office says a fence will be put up around the site and that the city is "coordinating with a number of local service agencies to transition from the camp." Valkyrie wonders where they will transition to if there are no available shelter beds. — *Camilla Mortensen*