

## WHO WILL PAY FOR TRACKTOWN USA?

If and when the track and field's international governing body, International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF), brings its world championships to Eugene in 2021, it will be the biggest track event Hayward Field has ever seen.

But the cost of bringing the global track event to Eugene is just one part of the scandal that has erupted over the event and touching the group that has worked to bring it here, TrackTown USA. The nonprofit is pressing ahead with organizing the championships, and the decision to put state funding into this Eugene event lies in the hands of Oregon legislators.

Hayward is seen as a mecca for runners and has hosted the Olympic Trials, but 30,000 seats are needed to host the IAAF and Hayward currently seats 10,500. Forty million dollars is the number that has been cited repeatedly as what is needed from the state for infrastructure and renovations to bring the event to Eugene.

The track and field world was stunned in April 2015 when, after being passed over for the 2019 IAAF championships, Eugene was suddenly awarded one of the world's largest athletic events, the 2021 championships.

In November 2015, allegations of doping and bribery rocked the IAAF, and Sebastian Coe, the new head of the IAAF, admitted to taking undisclosed, yearly payments of \$150,000 from Nike for years. Oregon-based Nike has been a key player in backing the effort to bring the IAAF to Eugene.

In December, it was announced French prosecutors were investigating the decision to award the championships to Eugene, leaving the championships a question for many.

Back in 2014, then-governor John Kitzhaber pledged \$40 million to the event. But earlier this January, *The Register-Guard* revealed that after TrackTown's Executive Director Vin Lananna first contacted Kitzhaber for funding, the request was met with "coolness and skepticism." The governor soon changed his mind.

The *R-G* writes, "Kitzhaber's apparent reversal coincided with almost \$400,000 in campaign contributions he received during a 42-day period in September and October 2014 from athletic apparel giant Nike, its co-founder Phil Knight and its CEO Mark Parker, as well as four members of the UO Board of Trustees."

*EW* contacted Lane County's legislators to ask them if they would vote for a \$40 million subsidy to bring the games to Eugene.

Rep. Nancy Nathanson has been named as the legislator who would introduce a bill in the 2016 short session that begins in February to fund the event. She says the *R-G* "misunderstood the purpose of the bill, based on what must have been old and incomplete information."

Nathanson tells *EW*, "My bill will increase resources for the Tourism Commission to invest in furthering the state's tourism industry, to promote *all* of Oregon, and specific sites, activities and places in every region. TrackTown would be eligible to submit a proposal to the Commission, just as other projects submit grant requests."

Sen. Floyd Prozanski says he supports bringing the games to Eugene, and "I am willing to support a state funding bill, but I must see the actual proposal before I can state whether I will actually vote for the bill."

Sen. Lee Beyer, like other elected officials *EW* contacted, says he has not seen a proposal for the \$40 million but that "the biggest part of any funding would come from a 1-percent increase in the statewide hotel room tax." He points out that the tax, currently at 1 percent, is "dedicated to promoting tourism" and that it's "probably worth noting that the hotel tax is generally paid by out-of-state visitors, not Oregonians."

Lananna told *The Oregonian* that TrackTown has now scaled back its request for a lodging tax increase that would generate \$25 million, but if it doesn't get the \$40 million it needs in the short session, "we've got five years to bring people around." — *Camilla Mortensen*

• What's the buzz with the **Oakleigh Meadow Cohousing (OMC)** project? "We're still moving forward," says Will Dixon, the local architect for the controversial project off River Road next to the Willamette River bikepath. "We received re-approval of our tentative PUD application back in October," Dixon says. "No surprise, the opposition has appealed this once again to LUBA. On Nov. 12 we re-applied our final PUD application. We are hoping for final PUD approval early 2016, and anticipating the opposition to appeal this as well." Dixon says the appeals "will not keep us from being able to finalize our building permits and start construction." The development has 22 families committed out of 28 units, and Dixon says, "We are more committed than ever to see this project through."

Meanwhile, neighborhood activist Paul Conte tells us, "OMC [and city staff] are trying to circumvent laws and regulations that are in place to protect the safety of residents of new developments, as well as current residents whose safety would be affected by the impacts of new development." Conte says Oakleigh Lane, which allows resident parking on the gravel shoulders, must accommodate two lanes of traffic to adequately serve OMC and emergency vehicles, but the narrow "sub-standard" passage includes private property and "the owners have a right to park on that pavement or even forbid cars to travel over it."

• What happens to the huge volume of human hair that gets swept up at salons and barbershops in Lane County? **Salon DeLange** at 3011 N. Delta Hwy. in Eugene is diverting its waste products, including hair, to a specialized recycling center in Seattle. "The hair that is recycled is used to absorb oils spills, and it is both more effective and greener than the synthetic alternatives," says Haley Jones from the salon. DeLange has been recently certified as a Green Circle Salon, along with **Bare Body Waxing and Hair Studio** above Beppe and Gianni's Trattoria near Hayward Field.

• Kathy Stewart-Bronson, owner of **Ultimate Fitness LLC** Personal Training and Massage Therapy, will be moving and expanding her business on Friday, Jan. 15, to 82 Centennial Loop. Ultimate Fitness specializes in post-rehab training and therapies, people with multiple sclerosis and Parkinson's, along with goal-specific training. Stewart-Bronson will start teaching exercise classes again in February. See [ultimatefitnessor.com](http://ultimatefitnessor.com) for schedule.

• The **Network Charter School** has purchased the building at 2550 Portland Street, previously occupied by Security First Child Development Center. A welcoming event with teachers, parents and board members will be at 2 pm Tuesday, Jan. 19, at the new location. Light refreshments and student entertainment are planned. Call 344-1229 for more information.

• Free **one-on-one job help sessions** are being offered from 4 to 6 pm Thursday, Jan. 14, and again Thursday, Jan. 28, at the Eugene Public Library. Preregister for the half-hour counseling sessions by calling 682-5450.



## HAPPENING PEOPLE

BY PAUL NEEVEL

### JON LABROUSSE

The son of an active-duty Marine, Jon Labrousse grew up in several West Coast cities, then went to high school in Hawaii. "Most of the kids were Asians and Pacific Islanders," he says. "It was a huge growth experience." He enrolled at Oregon State University to study engineering, but after a required reading class with John Campbell he began writing poetry and changed his major to English. He spent two years teaching in Japan and South Korea before settling in Eugene in 1996 with his wife, Tasha Katsuda. "We met at OSU," he says. She embarked on a career with the school district as a teacher, then as administrator, while he finished a master's in education, worked as a teacher and a tech consultant, and was an at-home dad for children Malia and Kegan. After years of submitting his poems to journals, Labrousse broke out as a performer at local poetry slams and with Team Eugene at the 2005 National Poetry Slam. Since December 2010 he has taught seventh and eighth grades at Ridgeline Montessori Public Charter School, where his own kids have been students. When the school lost its part-time Spanish teacher to budget cuts, he applied for a grant to buy seven ukuleles for his classroom. "Music is a language," he says. "Every morning starts with music. The kids love it." More ukes were added, and a performance group, TRUE (The Ridgeline Ukulele Experience), that has played many local stages. "I used to be known as a poet," Labrousse says. "Now I'm the guy who plays ukulele with the kids."

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