

CITY BECOMING ARCHITECTURAL CENTER OF AREA

West's Growth Seen In Gleaming Buildings

By Bill Force
Mail Tribune Staff Writer

The Pacific northwest is expanding faster than any other part of the nation. That growth is not based on boom economics but on the firm foundation of ideal living conditions, cheap hydroelectric power for industry and a wealth of natural resources.

Among the first beneficiaries of the solid, well-sustained growth of a particular region are the architects. Increased population and material wealth are immediately reflected in the transformation of the physical face of the land, and much of the new, gleaming modern face of the southern Oregon-northern California region could well bear the legend, "Designed in Medford."

There are only two licensed practicing architects in Medford and both of them are hectically busy. Their drawing boards are piled high with sketches and blueprints of projects they may not get to for months. These two men—Robert Keeney and William Laing—have made Medford a veritable center of architecture in this middle coastal region. Both are men of vision and imagination who have become widely known for the functional and technical excellence of their work.

Design Landmarks

Actually the two are competitors; they maintain separate practices. But in a certain sense they are partners in the lives of everyone who lives or does business in this area. The handsome piles of stone and concrete they have designed in the past five or ten years have the makings of enduring landmarks that will testify to the prosperity of this inland valley and the wonderland around it.

Since coming to Medford in 1936, William Laing has specialized in school architecture to the point where he is thoroughly expert in that field. The Riverside school in Grants Pass is the product of his drawing boards and has earned him the commendation of national educators' groups. He is now in the midst of intensive research in preparation for the construction of a \$318,000 school for the Sacred Heart Catholic parish of Medford. He plans an extended inspection tour of church schools in California before the final working plans of the building are drawn.

He brings to the job the skill and experience that will guarantee Medford in general and the Sacred Heart parish in particular one of the finest, parochial school buildings in the state. Many Schools

Laing designed schools or school extensions are serving students in Grants Pass, Gold Beach, Brookings, Illinois Valley, Rogue River, Griffin Creek, Prospect, Jacksonville, Shady Cove and Jerome Prairie. Laing began his career as an architectural draftsman in Edinburgh, Scotland, as a boy. From there he went to serve apprenticeships in architectural offices in Perth, London and Liverpool. During his years of training, he studied nights at the Northampton Polytechnic Institute. He later crossed the Atlantic and took up residence in Canada but he still reveals his Scotch origins with a soft highland brogue. He first became a registered architect in Alberta in 1911, coming to Ashland in 1930 and to Medford six years later.

County Homes Important

He feels that the most important jobs he has done are the two homes for the aged and indigent designed for Jackson and Douglas counties. The Jackson county

institution is located on highway 99 near Talent and will be ready for occupancy within two or three days. Construction on the Douglas county farm begins tomorrow at Roseburg. Both are handsome concrete structures designed with the pocketbooks of the taxpayers kept uppermost in mind. The courts of both counties have been started at the fine buildings Laing has designed for them to be built at extraordinarily small cost. The Roseburg home will be almost a carbon copy of the model home built here but will be somewhat larger.

Keeney's Work Seen

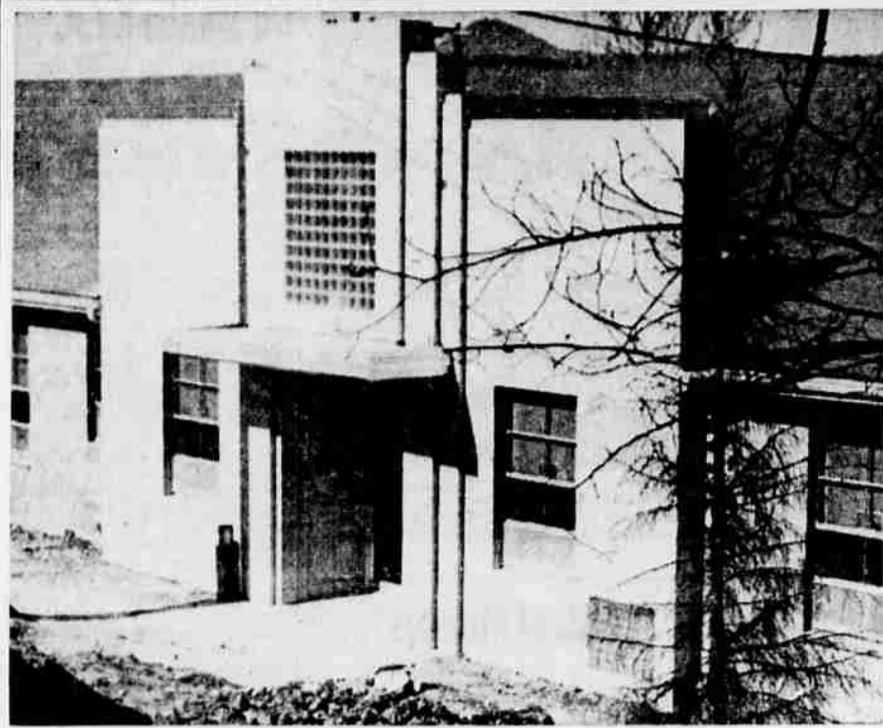
No one passes through Medford's business district without seeing examples of Robert Keeney's work on every hand. The shopping district here has been described as one of the most modern in any city of comparable size in Oregon and much of the credit for that reputation should go to the architect who designed or remodeled the buildings.

Two of his best known remodeling jobs are the Newberry building at East Sixth street and South Central avenue and the Medical Center building just across the street. The J. J. Newberry store is already completed and the Medical Center building, though still covered with scaffolding, will soon present the same sleek modernity as its neighbor across the street.

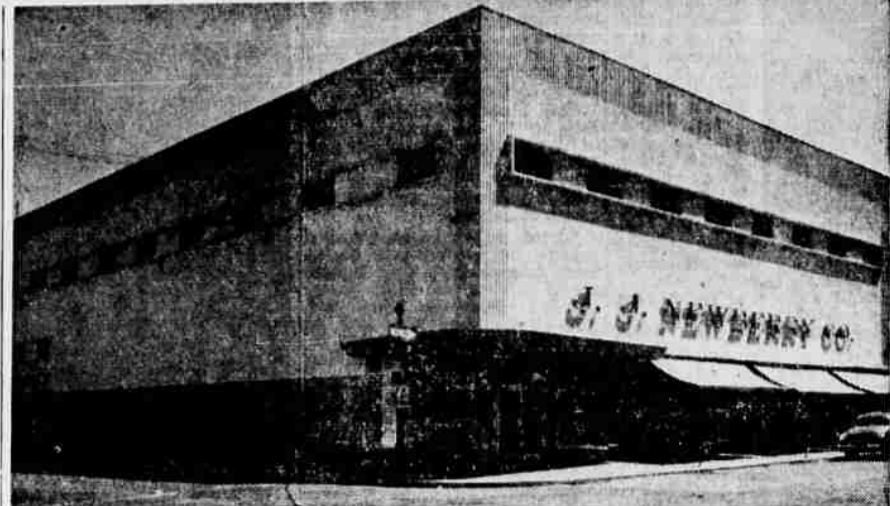
Bus travelers arriving in Medford are greeted with a beautiful modern terminal that Keeney designed two years ago for Pacific Greyhound lines and it is now considered one of the finest Greyhound terminals in the state. Firm Expands

Keeney's firm has expanded, since he first began practicing here in 1937, to two branch offices in addition to his main office here. He maintains staffs at Coos Bay and at Crescent City. An example of the extent of his work is shown in a list of his current projects: he is now at work on a new courthouse for Siskiyou county in California; he is constructing schools in northern California, Myrtle Point, in the Coos Bay area and here in the Rogue Valley; he is building an addition to the Medford Ice and Storage company plant; he is working on plans for the St. James Episcopal church in Coquille, and he is drawing plans for the remodeling of the front of the Elks temple in Ashland.

There is a wide range to Keeney's work. It runs from such aesthetic projects as the lounge at the Rogue Valley country club to designs for industrial structures like the Reter Fruit cold storage plant and the Crystal Springs Packing company plant. The clean, simple gothic lines of the St. Peter's Lutheran church here are also



LAING-DESIGNED FARM HOME—This is the imposing tile and glass main entrance to the new Jackson county farm home that was built at a cost of about \$150,000, including equipment. Architect William Laing designed the building with economy plus maximum efficiency in mind. It has already been taken as a model for another farm home at Roseburg. It will be opened within a few days under the supervision of Mrs. Susie Maust.



DESIGN BY KEENEY—The J. J. Newberry company building, at the corner of South Central avenue and East Sixth street, is an excellent example of the simple, sleek and functional design that is the hallmark of Architect Robert Keeney's work. Several of Medford's most modern and attractive public and business buildings have been designed by Keeney, who now maintains two branch offices to handle the wide demand for his services.

The Grange

Phoenix Grange

Phoenix Grange met April 25 with Master Dee Hendrickson presiding. Visitors were R. R. Lytle, county commissioner from Bellview Grange and Mrs. Ed Goehing from Griffin Creek Grange. Mrs. Goehing invited Phoenix Grangers to visit Griffin Creek Grange and announced their dance May 6 at Griffin Creek Grange hall.

Mr. and Mrs. A. M. Moner were voted to be members by demit from Josephine county. Mr. and Mrs. Ray Ward are visiting their home Grange after spending the winter in the southern states.

Nyla Kuest was in charge of display table and told about her collection of Japanese articles sent to her as gifts to every member in the family.

Edith Poe, Olin Poe and Charles Hockersmith were escorted to master's station and each received a pen and pencil set.

H.E.C. Chairman Elsie Lewis reported on Farm Journal sales and announced David Chase, the Crosby dealer of Phoenix, would install free in the Grange a new Crosley electric range if the members could sell ten electrical appliances by September 30. A motion was passed to try for this offer.

During lectures program members told fishing stories. Mr. Lytle spoke on taxes and welfare conditions. Brother and sister Ward told briefly of their travels. Lecturer presenter singers Nyla Kuest, Addie Simmonds and Louise Norton. Pianist was Mrs. Schmelzer.

Next regular Grange meeting will be May 9. Serving committee will be Mr. and Mrs. Cliff Maust, Mr. and Mrs. Ray Ward and Mr. and Mrs. Melvin Lattie. Refreshment chairman for the evening was Mrs. George Drake. Grange will meet on standard time, 8 p.m.



REAR VIEW—This is a view from the rear of the new Jackson county farm home near Talent. Shown is the rear or kitchen wing of the 52-bed facility that will be ready to accommodate the county's old people within a few days.

New Law Expands GI Home Loan Benefits

World War II veterans will find home loan benefits enhanced by provisions of the housing act of 1950, just signed by the president, veterans administration spokesmen said last week in outlining changes in the G.I. home loan program.

Brannock said regulations and procedures to put the new provisions into effect are now being drafted by the VA and will be issued as soon as possible. He asked lenders and veterans to keep inquiries to a minimum.

Principal changes are:

1. The amount of the VA's guaranty on eligible veterans' home loans is increased to 60 percent of the loan up to a maximum of \$7,500. Previously, the guarantee was 50 percent up to \$4,000. Under the new law, the 60 percent ratio will apply on mortgages up to \$12,500, with the guarantee remaining at \$7,500 for loans over \$12,500.

Despite the increased guaranty, the VA gratuity payment on credit on the veteran's loan will remain at 4 percent of the first \$4,000 of guarantee used, and may not exceed \$160.

2. Unmarried widows of veterans who died in service or from service-connected causes after discharge, are eligible for loan benefits to which their husbands would have been entitled.

3. Combination FHA-GI loans to veterans will be eliminated after a date to be announced by Carl R. Gray Jr., administrator of veterans affairs.

4. The maximum period of time over which home loans may be made repayable is extended from 25 years to 30 years, to provide lower monthly payments.

5. Effective 90 days hence, VA authorized to make direct government loans at 4 percent interest to eligible veterans in certain areas where 4 percent home financing is not available from other sources. No direct loan may exceed \$10,000.

6. Homes on which construction is to begin subsequent to 60 days from the effective date of the law will not be eligible for sale to veterans with the aid of G.I. loans unless the property meets certain minimum construction requirements as prescribed by VA.

7. VA is authorized, in certain circumstances, to restore the loan guaranty rights of veterans who used their entitlement to purchase property which later is taken through condemnation, or is destroyed by fire or other natural hazard.

To Limit Fees

8. VA is authorized and directed to issue regulations limiting the fees and other charges which may be made against builder and veterans in connection with the construction and sale of homes financed through G.I. loans.

9. The Federal Mortgage association is given \$250,000,000 in additional authority for the purchase of G. I. and FHA loans made by private lending agencies. This must be used for current purchases only, and is not subject to earmarking in the form of commitments for future purchases.

10. Provisions are included to make GI loans for farm dwellings easier to obtain, and farm loans are granted equality with other home loans with respect to eligibility for purchase by Fanny May.

News of 4-H Clubs

West Side

The West Side 4-H Garden and Flower club held two meetings during April, both in the school. A plant exchange will be held at the first May meeting, with each member to bring a plant to trade for another. Refreshments were served at the first meeting by Mrs. Metternich, the assistant leader, and by the leader, Mrs. Maybelle Rains and Mrs. Metternich, at the latter meeting.

City's 1949 Report Proving Popular

The city of Medford has received five requests for copies of its 1949 annual report and the report has been the subject of brief articles in American City and Western City magazines, according to City Superintendent Vernon Thorpe.

He said the requests, along with routine sending of copies to other agencies, had depleted the city's supply of extra copies. Asking for the report were Summit county, Ohio; Springfield, Mass.; Royal Oak, Mich.; Princeton university and Griffin, Ga.

HALF CHOW NO LIKE

Bristol, Va.—(UPI)—Half Chow, a dog, had his day in court here but he didn't like it. Half Chow was exhibit A in a case charging John Casper, 33, with dog stealing. Exhibit A jumped out a window and Judge Robert Davis dismissed the case.

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Eagle Point School Sets Spring Concert

Eagle Point, Apr. 29—The annual spring music concert of Eagle Point high school will be held at 8:30 p.m. Friday, May 5, at the school gymnasium.

Directors Steve Whipple said the concert will have a general spring theme with varied selections. The program will include band and chorus numbers and vocal and instrumental trios and solos.

There will be no charge for admission and the public is invited. Whipple pointed out that the event will give residents of the community an opportunity

to see the progress made by music students during the past school year.

Six Children Killed As Train Hits Taxicab

Campus, Ill., Apr. 29—(UPI)—Six grade school children and a taxicab driver were killed when a speeding Wabash railroad train crashed into their school taxi at 70 miles an hour as they rode home from school.

The taxi served as an improvised school bus for rural children at the Campus grammar school. The dead represented almost one-fourth of the total enrollment at the tiny, two-room school.

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