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Taxes, rates and withholding information

A Local Column By John F. Fearing

I haven't written
anything in this space for a
long time...maybe there
wasn't anything worth
writing about. But in the
past month or so, life has
gotten more interesting.

Last week you learned
that unless damaging cuts
are made in expenditures of
the three local govern-
ments that serve Eagle
Lake area residents, taxes
will have to increase.

That worries the school
officials, both elected and
employed. Their worry
seems to be that the public
reaction will be to a tax in-
crease...or rather how bad
the outcry will be.

You also learned last
week that rates will be in-
creased on most of the city
services supported by the
people who use them.

Mainly, water and sewer
rates are being increased.
The city council rates and
revenue committee, Mike
Dunne, Roy Dean Van Nort
and chairman Gene Baker,
spent a good deal of time
with city manager Robert
Klockman discussing costs,
the future of the systems,
and the money needed to
operate them.

Perhaps for the first
time, they included money
to replace equipment as it
wears out.

Then the committee

decided how much the rates
should be increased to
produce that amount of
revenue. That's the right
way to do it too.

However, there was a
brief mention of what the
public reaction was going to
be, and some discussion of
what rates residents of
nearby cities pay.

When they started
talking about rates other
cities charge, I couldn't help
but think that was ab-
solutely not the way to set
rates. It would be damaging
to say that rates are
cheaper in other cities, so
we should lower rates. If
that was done, what would
happen tomorrow when a
mythical \$20,000 piece of
equipment breaks? There
would be no money
available to pay for it.

My rate is being in-
creased. The city council
rates and revenue commit-
tee, Mike Dunne, Roy Dean
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