

Julie,

I have read recently that there is a proposal to shutter the Junction City Hospital because of state budget shortfalls. I am well aware of the budget process having owned and operated a business in the Eugene area for over 33 years as well as having served on numerous non-profit boards and committees. Budget constraints are a reality in our current business climate particularly in the public sector. I am all for balancing them. I think that is not only fiscally responsible but fair as it relates to those of us tax payers that expect those we elect to spend our money wisely. I am also aware that in cases like these there are many options for balancing the budget and fully understand that the decision comes down to making cuts in the programs that are deemed less likely to serve the common public good. On the surface the Junction City Hospital may look like low hanging fruit and easy to cut. Before it was built, I did not have a personal reason to defend it even being built. I actually could have cared less. But that was short sighted and selfish. I just did not realize the impact that this hospital would have on not only its patients, but was ignorant on what the impact would be on our community. I have since had the opportunity to see the purpose this hospital serves to all of us.

In a highly publicized event a local doctor was attacked by his adult son who was having a psychotic episode. His son was found guilty of the attack and was sentenced to the Junction City Hospital to serve his sentence and for treatment. He is a changed person because of this Hospital and the entire family has been able to experience the changes that they will believe will lead to a full recovery. Had this opportunity not been there, this would have been a broken family who would have lost a brother and a son forever. Instead of the likelihood that he will be returned as a functioning member of society who will be able to return to work and support himself, we may have ended up supporting him in prison for a substantial portion of his young life...lost in a system that has no way of addressing his true needs. These are numbers that are not counted in making the final decision...the worth of the Hospital in numbers that are real but hard to put on a balance sheet.

So my request is simple. Please consider the benefits of keeping a fully functioning hospital that has the ability to treat the mental needs of those who cannot help themselves so that when they are released back into society they can be reunited with those that love them instead of processed back into a system that will likely send them back to face the same problems that got them into trouble in the first place...or worse.

Sincerely

Daryl M Egbert
Eugene, OR