Governor begins second term with call for unity

by Bend Weekly News Sources

Gov. Kulongoski touts vision to move all of Oregon forward is shared opportunity and shared responsibility Salemâ€“Governor Ted Kulongoski, joined by family and friends, took the oath of office for his second four-year term as Governor of Oregon on Monday, calling upon all Oregonians to work together in building a brighter future for every Oregonian based on shared opportunity and shared responsibility. â€œThis is a great moment of opportunity for Oregon. Our economy is strong. Our confidence is renewed. Our belief in the future is redeemed,â€• Governor Kulongoski told the joint session of the Legislature assembled at the State Capitol. â€œBut to seize that opportunity we must stand united.â€• Remembering the hard economy and divisive politics of recent years, Governor Kulongoski emphasized the moment of opportunity facing Oregon today and asked legislators and the public to join him in a commitment to bridging the divides and working together to turn â€œthis great moment of opportunity into Oregonâ€™s longest and strongest period of prosperity.â€• â€œThe next four years is more than an opportunity to build on the gathering strength of Oregonâ€™s economy. It is an opportunity to remember why we love this place called Oregon â€“ and wouldnâ€™t live anywhere else,â€• the Governor said leading into his vision for the next legislative session and his next term in office. Opportunity for Oregonâ€™s Children Noting that â€œgovernment bears a special responsibility to children,â€• the Governor urged passage of several measures to ensure every child in Oregon has the opportunity to succeed. His Education Enterprise plan would make a sustained investment in all levels of education including preschool, K-12, public universities and community colleges. And he asked the business community to endorse an increase in the ten dollar corporate minimum income tax to fully fund Head Start so all eligible 3- and 4-year olds have the opportunity to enter school ready to learn. In addition, Governor Kulongoski promised to ensure that every child in Oregon has access to affordable health care through his Healthy Kids Plan, noting that, â€œinsuring all children is the beginning, not the end, of our health care challenge.â€• Economic Opportunity for All Oregonians Highlighting his own story, the Governor touted his vision for helping all Oregonians access the American Dream. â€œOpportunity did not carry me across the finish line, but it did put me on the starting line â€“ and thatâ€™s all I ever wanted,â€• the Governor said. â€œMy story is not so different from your story and the story of millions of other Oregonians. We werenâ€™t asking for a guarantee of success â€“ just an opportunity for find success.â€• To permanently turn the page on the economic hardships of recent memory, Governor Kulongoski vowed to provide working Oregonians with the skills to compete in a global marketplace so they can provide for themselves and their families. â€œOpportunity lifts Oregonians â€“ of every race and ethnic background â€“ onto the economic ladder, allowing them to learn a skill, find a family wage job, purchase a home, pay for health insurance, and save for college,â€• the Governor said. â€œOpportunity transforms equity and fairness from moral words into social and economic action â€“ and closes the gap, as we must, between those who have found the American Dream and those whose faces are pressed up against the window of that Dream.â€• An Opportunity for a Sustainable Oregon In talking about state governmentâ€™s shared responsibility with the private sector on the addressing the growing social and environmental costs of our nationâ€™s dependence on foreign oil, the Governor renewed his commitment to work with the private sector to make Oregon a global leader in renewable and alternative energies. â€œA generation ago Oregon led the nation on the preservation of beaches and stewardship of public land. Today we must lead on global warming â€“ and the development of biofuels and other alternative energy sources,â€• said the Governor. â€œOn energy independence, where Oregon goes, America will learn to follow.â€• Opportunity is the Oregon Way In closing, the Governor called upon the state of Oregon to take hold of the opportunity before us and to remain united to extend that opportunity to all Oregonians. â€œWhy should we pay so much attention to giving the gift of opportunity? Because opportunity is the Oregon way,â€• the Governor said. â€œWe do not move ahead by leaving others behind. We move ahead by tapping the skills, creativity and potential of each and every one of us. That makes opportunity a two-way street. We invest in the individual â€“ and that investment pays for itself many times over for all of Oregon.â€• The Governor also called on the legislature and the public to join him in putting differences aside. â€œDefining ourselves by our differences can never move us forward. And opportunity is all about moving forward,â€• the Governor said. â€œBut sure as I am standing here, there is only one way that we can take advantage of the opportunity that comes with a growing economy, we must work out our different points

of view by working together.â€• The Test of Opportunity The Governor closed with a challenge to the legislature to make the most of today to better Oregon for future generations. â€œThe test we face today is: Can we â€˜see the rightâ€™ in a time of prosperity? Or will be too blinded by the light of our good fortune to notice the many among us who are just one opportunity away from their own good fortune?â€• Governor Kulongoski asked. â€œThis is our moment to decide. This is our childrenâ€™s moment to flourish. And by extending the hand of generosity, equality and opportunity to all â€“ this is the State of Oregonâ€™s moment to be reborn as Americaâ€™s State of Grace.â€• For the complete text of the speech go to http://governor.oregon.gov/Gov/speech/speech_010807.shtml

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