

Governor delivers mid-session review of 2007 Legislature

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

At the City Club of Portland, Governor applauds progress, calls for championship session Portland, Oregon
“ Governor Ted Kulongoski delivered a mid-session report to hundreds of civic leaders and members of the public Friday at the Portland City Club, highlighting early successes, challenges and the two paths available for the remainder of the 2007 legislative session. “The question “ and challenge “ I put before the Legislature and the public is this: What will Oregonians 30 years from now say about the 2007 session?“ the Governor posed to the audience. “With the session at its midpoint there are two possible futures for this session. One is of partisan bickering, opportunities squandered, and dreams dashed. The other is of hope “ where this great moment of opportunity becomes Oregon’s longest and strongest period of prosperity.“

The Governor emphasized the importance of the public’s role in shaping the outcome of the legislative session, calling on citizens across Oregon to engage in the legislative process. “You’re the citizens. You know, as a community, where Oregon needs to invest. But the fact is, the legislature doesn’t care how much you know until they know how much you care,” the Governor said. “So my message to you is this: set the bar high, demand accountability and tell everyone in Salem “ including me “ that between now and sine die, think of our children, think of our future “ do what is best for Oregon.“ The Governor applauded the legislature for working across party lines in the spirit of good policy, rather than politics, to enact landmark changes to Oregon’s fiscal structure, establishing the first General Fund rainy day fund for the next economic downturn, and to break the three session gridlock to create a common health insurance pool for all 198 school districts in Oregon. “Teams deserve recognition when they’re scoring points, and I can tell you that the Democratic leadership team is delivering,” the Governor said. “But they’re not doing this alone. Many times since January, I’ve seen a spirit of cooperation much like the Oregon I remember when I was in the Legislature three decades ago.“ Other successes that have passed one chamber and are moving to the other include bills to cap fees at check-cashing stores, extend payday lending regulations to cover out-of-state and Internet lenders, establishing regulations for car title loans, outlawing discrimination based on sexual orientation, and streamlining state permitting processes. But to make the session truly historic, the Governor identified four key criteria that must still be address: education, renewable energy, health care and the Oregon State Police. “If this session was a hike up a snow-capped mountain, we’d be standing at the timberline “ a long ways from where we started, but also a long way from the summit,” the Governor said. “To reach that summit, we have four steep climbs ahead of us “ make Oregon the leader in alternative energy, provide affordable health care for all of our children, restore round-the-clock patrols for the Oregon State Police, and make critical investments to give Oregon the best educated, skilled and trained workforce in America.“ The Governor underscored the economic significance of his energy agenda, the immediate need before Oregon to ensure affordable health care is available to all children and more working families, the long overdue commitment to the Oregon State Police, and that “having a first-rate education system will be the difference between winning and losing in the global marketplace.“ In closing, the Governor summarized the first half of session and set his vision for the second half. “We’re about to take the field for the second half of the 2007 session. We’ve played well so far “ and scored some significant points, but now we need big plays in energy, health care, public safety and energy,” the Governor said. “Coaches, players and fans know in their hearts when it is their year to win. This is Oregon’s year for a championship season, and with your loud and persistent voice “ we will seize it!“ For the full text of the speech, [click here](#).

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