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In the Capitol...

Serving West & So. Salem, Monmouth & Independence

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Note: My office will be closed between Dec. 23 and Jan.1 in observance of the holiday season. Phone and e-mail messages will be monitored daily.

See you next year!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



Update on 3rd Bridge in West Salem

A third bridge in Salem is no longer just a conversation topic had around the dinner table. The Oregon Department of Transportation and the City of Salem have joined together to create the "Salem River Crossing Project" which will serve as the vehicle for pursuing the construction of the long anticipated third bridge.

On Dec. 6th I attended an open house at the West Salem Roth's hosted by the Salem River Crossing Project. Presentations were made by ODOT project managers and Task Force members on the process of pursuing a third bridge.

I will continue to monitor the progress of the project and will periodically provide updates on the project in my newsletter.

For more information about the project, please visit www.salemrivercrossing.org.

Community Outreach Schedule of Meetings

Neighborhood Association Meetings

Croisan Creek/Illahe
January 16th @ 7:00pm
Location TBA

Faye Wright
January 25th @ 7:00pm
Wright Elementary School

Grant
January 4th @ 6:15pm
Grant Community School

Sunnyslope
January 16th @ 7:00pm
Schirle Elementary School

West Salem
January 15th @ 7:00pm
West Salem Roth's IGA

Reaction to Governor's 2007-09 Budget

Intent is noteworthy but equates to an unsustainable budget

On December 4, Governor Kulongoski unveiled his budget for the 2007-09 biennium. Hailed as the "Hope and Opportunity" budget, the Governor requested significant investments in education, economic development, children's health, law enforcement, criminal justice and renewable energy. This budget represents the starting point for negotiations between the Legislative Assembly and the Executive Office.

At first glance the budget appears to be a solution that addresses all of the state's needs. However, the Governor's budget is supported with tax increases totaling \$606 million. This budget does not live within our means and our means have grown since the last session.

Oregon's economy has continued to grow since the Legislature adjourned in 2005. A strengthening economy has provided more jobs for Oregonians resulting in more tax money. Earlier this month the Office of Economic Analysis confirmed that Oregon's tax base has increased by \$1.3 billion since August of 2005. I believe that now is the time to prepare for future needs through increasing our rainy day reserve.

Throughout the session I will be working with my fellow legislators to craft a balanced, sustainable budget.

"Retiming" the Legislature Let's see if it works

The leadership of both the House and Senate has been working on "retiming" the legislative session. In response to criticism of the past two sessions which were seen as too long and too unproductive, the plan for the 74th session is to adjourn on June 30, 2007.

Instead of giving interim authority to the Emergency Board, the full legislature will meet in the winter of 2008 for a brief special session to rebalance the budget and make statutory adjustments. This is a trial only, but it has worked effectively for other states.