



Senator Jackie Winters

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Winters and Courtney co-chair effort to target better use of resources in the fight against meth

Salem, OR - A blue ribbon task force convened by Senator Jackie Winters (R-Salem) and Senate President Peter Courtney (D-Salem) met for the first time Tuesday to target better use of federal, state, local and private resources to battle the methamphetamine epidemic and improve coordination at all levels of government and with the business community.

“We are continuing our fight to end the meth problem in our neighborhoods and its terrible impact on livability in Marion County,” stated Winters who serves as the task force co-chair. “Our actions will make a bold statement that meth is not wanted here, it will not be tolerated here and families with children will be safe here. This task force will connect the dots, identify the gaps and fix the problem.”

Co-chairs Winters and Courtney plan to make an interim report to the state’s Emergency Board, as well as a conclusive, comprehensive report to the 2007 Legislative Assembly.

“We’re bringing together outstanding can-do leaders from business, the public sector, and our communities,” commented co-chair Courtney. “We’ll devise a pilot project and articulate legislative action for 2007.”

Funding for the taskforce came through a small grant provided by the legislature. If the model is successful in Marion County the aim is to duplicate it in other parts of the state. By bringing representatives from groups that treat meth addicts, prosecute meth related crimes and work to keep people off meth the taskforce hopes to develop workable solutions to address all aspects of the epidemic.

The members of the task force are: Senate President Peter Courtney, Senator Jackie Winters, Judge Pamela Abernathy, Marion County Commissioner Janet Carlson; Marion County District Attorney Walt Beglau; Marion County Sheriff Raul Ramirez; Department of Human Services Director Dr. Bruce Goldberg; Oregon Housing and Community Services Director Bob Repine; Senator Gordon Smith’s representative Richard Krikava; Mid-Willamette Council of Governments Director Dave Galati; Salem-Keizer School Board member Bobby Mink; Craig Christoff, Hallmark Properties; John Gest, NB Enterprises; Dave Heffner, Professional Mortgage; Eric Lindauer, Oregon Community Foundation; Sam Skillern, Salem Leadership Foundation; Larry Tokarski; Dick Withnell, Withnell Motor Company; and Bryan Johnston.

Marion County consultant and retired public school educator Guido Caldarazzo will support the purpose and expectations of the blue ribbon task force.