

***November 2008***

***WHISNANT LEGISLATIVE INTERIM UPDATE***

Dear friends,

The good news is the elections are over and the great news is that the voters gave me the opportunity to continue working for you. It is a great honor to serve as your public servant as a State Representative. I accept the responsibility to serve you and will do it to the best of my ability. I appreciate the trust that almost 22,000 of you gave me. My number one priority still remains to be each person in District 53. I try to help anyone who asks for my help and assistance.

To help serve you, I have the team of Megan Schenewerk as Legislative Assistant; Josie Whisnant as our Administrative Assistant; and Tiffany Lewis as the District liaison to help me. Megan is a recent graduate of Corban College and has previous experience in the Capitol working for Representative Krieger, Morgan, and Greg Smith. In addition, she worked for Congressman Mike Pence (R-Indiana) in Washington, DC. Tiffany has helped us for about one year attending local events when I am not available. After 18 months of Capitol construction, we have finally moved into our new modest but greatly improved office in Room H- 471. We hope you will visit us to see your Capitol and the necessary remodels.

Since the elections, I have tried to visit with many local officials in preparation for the 2009 75<sup>th</sup> Oregon Legislative Session. From November 12- 14, Megan, Tiffany, and I met with the County Commissioners and County Administrator; the Redmond Mayor, City Manager, and seated and newly elected Councilors; La Pine Mayor and City Manager; Sunriver Owners Association President, General Manager, and Police and Fire Chiefs; COCC President. OSU-CC Executive Officer; Bend-La Pine and Redmond School Superintendents; the Sisters and La Pine Fire Chiefs, and the County CCF Executive Director and Board members. We are planning more visits in December.

**PFC EGGLESTON'S MEMORIAL SERVICE**

On Saturday, November 1<sup>st</sup>, Josie and I joined the Governor, Congressman Walden, officials, friends, and family at the County Fair Arena to celebrate the life of PFC Cody "CJ" Eggleston from Redmond. 21 year-old Cody was injured in Iraq and died from those injuries on October 24, 2008. We appreciate PFC Eggleston's ultimate sacrifice for our freedoms and this nation and give his family and friends our deepest sympathy and prayers. Recently, celebrating Veterans Day, it is appropriate to remember all the men and women who have served our nation in uniform.

**COMMITTEES/WORK GROUPS**

I continue to serve as vice chairs of the interim House Education and Judiciary Committees. In addition, I am serving on four House Education Committee work groups on "Student Vision Screening" and "finger printing." Since my last report, the Interim House Education Committee met and passed committee bills including two bills from the Student Vision Screening work group which I chaired. The Interim Judiciary Committee has held three meetings. I have attended three Oregon Commission on Children and Families meetings, as the only State Representative member. In September, I attended the House Interim Committee on Energy and Environmental meeting in Sisters.

## **CONFERENCES/SYMPOSIUMS/FORUMS**

- Aug: Annual American Legislative Exchange Council meeting in Chicago
- Aug: Oregon Transportation Commission meeting in Redmond

## **SPECIAL LOCAL EVENTS/SPEAKING**

- July: La Pine Rodeo and La Pine Frontier Days
- July: Newberry Habitat for Humanity fund raiser
- July: New Generations Day Care Center fund raiser
- Aug: Deschutes County Fair
- Aug: Redmond Reroute Opening ceremony
- Aug: Redmond Chambers fund raiser
- Sept: Speaker at Sunriver Rotary Club
- Sept: Speaker at Redmond Rotary Club
- Sept: Speaker at Mt. Bachelor Rotary Club
- Sept: Upper Deschutes River Coalition "River Cleanup" project
- Sept: Speaker at Redmond Kiwanis Club
- Oct: Speaker at Redmond Masonic Lodge
- Nov: Redmond Veterans Day parade
- Nov: Speaker at La Pine Veterans Day celebration

## **2009 75<sup>TH</sup> LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

On January 12<sup>th</sup>, I will have the honor of swearing to you that I will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Oregon, and that I will faithfully discharge the duties of Oregon State Representative according to the best of my ability. The make up of the House will be 36 Democrats and 24 Republicans. Of our 60 person body: 13 will be freshmen; 5 have been appointed since the last session; and 12 are sophomores. Thus, 30 or one-half of the body will have had one or less session experience. If you had not voted to end term limits; imagine what the experience level would have been. In addition, we have lost both Ways and Means co-chairs who are charged with building our balanced budget. Facing each member will be a deficit of close to \$1 billion and the state and nation in a recession or at least a significant economic downturn. Thus, Oregon will be celebrating on February 14 its 150 year old birthday as a state in very difficult economic times. I pledge I will work to pass good legislation to help us recover as soon as possible, holding government accountable and making it more efficient.

During the session, you may contact us at 900 Court Street NE, Room H-471, Salem, Oregon 97301; phone is 503-986-1453; email at [rep.genewhisnant@state.or.us](mailto:rep.genewhisnant@state.or.us) Also, you may follow our work by asking to be added to our "Legislative Updates" emails, and watch the Salem Committee hearings and floor session on closed circuit television, the link is <http://www.orgeonchannel.org/rams.htm>.

*Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas, Happy Holiday, & Happy New Year,*

*Representative Gene Whisnant*