



Legislative Report Representative Brad Witt



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Hi Everyone,

There have been several meetings in District 31 during the last couple of weeks that focused on issues of great importance to many of our citizens. I'd like to share some of that information with you in this newsletter, especially those items that might require some action to be taken by either you or your neighbors.

FEMA FLOOD MAP REVISIONS...VERY IMPORTANT!

On September 30th, representatives of the cities and the county (Columbia County) met at their quarterly meeting to discuss items of mutual interest. Prominent among these was a presentation by Todd Dugdale, Director of the Columbia County Planning Department, informing us of the decision by FEMA to revise Columbia and Clatsop County flood maps.

Because of extensive flooding throughout the United States, including the levee failures surrounding Hurricane Katrina, the extensive flooding in the Red River Valley, and our own floods of 1996 and 2007, FEMA is revising its flood maps to reflect increased risk. This impacts many homeowners, businesses and industrial sites throughout Columbia and Clatsop Counties. Some properties formerly zoned **AE** (in the 100 year flood plain), are now zoned **A** (no established flood plain). **This revision means a number of important changes including what can be built in these zones and whether or not you must have flood insurance!**

It is my understanding that everyone affected by these revisions has been notified by the Columbia and Clatsop County planning departments. Clatsop County has already adopted their revisions, but if you live in Columbia County and your zoning has been revised, it is imperative that you contact your insurance agent to acquire flood insurance prior to November 26, 2010, when the map revisions go into effect. By securing insurance prior to that date, you will qualify for a much less expensive flood insurance premium.

For those of you living within a diking district, the next 18-24 months will prove critical as those districts continue working with the Federal Congressional Delegation and the Corps of Engineers to obtain dike recertification. I'll keep you posted as I become informed of new information. If you have any questions, please call either Glenn Higgins with Columbia County at 503-397-1501, or Jennifer Bunch with Clatsop County at 503-325-8611.

FORECLOSURE PREVENTION PROGRAMS...

The Housing and Community Services Department has announced the receipt of \$82.7 million from the US Department of Treasury for foreclosure prevention activities. Oregon is one of 18 states that qualify for the "Hardest Hit Fund," which is an effort to stabilize the housing market. Oregon will add the funds to its already approved Oregon Homeownership Stabilization Initiative program to be implemented early next year.

For information on the Oregon Homeownership Stabilization Initiative, see <http://www.oregonhomeownerhelp.org>. Homeowners who need help immediately should call 1-800-SAFENET (1-800-453-5511). Please pass the word along to anyone you know who is in jeopardy of losing their home.

HIGHWAY 30 SAFETY CORRIDOR...

For those of us living in Columbia County, it is very likely that the Oregon Dept. of Transportation will be designating a large portion of the Warren area as a Safety Corridor. This comes in response to the concerns of many residents regarding the number of crashes, some of them fatal, occurring at the Bennett Road and Church Road intersections.

It is interesting to know that, over the last 10 years, crash data for US 30, from Cornelius Pass to the Clatsop County line, have held fairly constant at 156 crashes per year. However, Bennett and Church Roads are considered a hot spot, and they rank in the top 5% of the entire state. ODOT, along with the Columbia County Traffic Safety Commission are forming a Traffic Safety Working Group, and a formal traffic safety audit will be conducted. I am a member of the working group, so I will keep you posted as the group develops its recommendations to ODOT.

AROUND THE DISTRICT...

Pictures from the district...

Finally, please feel free to call or write if I can be of any assistance with any of the issues covered in this newsletter, or any other state policies that are of concern. Have a great weekend, and thanks again for reading my newsletter!



Celebrating the last rite of summer.
Enjoying the Annual Brownsmead Cornfeed.



With Mayor Cheryl Young and Joe Schwab,
local author, at the Columbia City Celebration in September.



Sharing some good food and conversation with the Sauvie Island Grange.



Learning about the future of Public Utility Districts and COOPs in northwestern Oregon.



Groundbreaking at the new West Oregon Electric headquarters in Vernonia, with Bill Haack, Sen. Johnson, Commissioner Hyde and Rep. Boone.



Speaking in remembrance of 9-1-1 at the Amani Center Luau.



Astoria Library, presentation of the Mural "Goin' to the Library" painted by Svensen artist Dorothy Danielson.