

Bookends

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Total: 172 col. inches

How's the doing?

Gov. Ted Kulongoski's 2007 agenda

PASSED — Rainy day fund; corporate kicker suspension; state insurance pool for teachers

MOVING — Tax breaks for wind, solar, alternative energy; requirement for state to use 25 percent alternative energy by 2025; tax breaks for biofuel production; "shared responsibility" grants for college students

IN LIMBO — Cigarette tax increase to pay for children's health insurance; guarantee 61 percent of state general fund and lottery revenue for education; corporate minimum tax increase to pay for more Head Start programs

IN TROUBLE — Auto insurance tax to pay for more state police troopers

Voter voices

Oregonians comment on Gov. Ted Kulongoski's second term:

Phil Dekker, 51, Democrat, Portland: "I don't know whether to blame him or the Legislature, but they can't seem to get things figured out. To me, the state tax structure is kind of screwed up. It doesn't seem to be getting resolved."

Elnae Brazil, 42, Republican, La Grande: "I don't think we need a higher cigarette tax. Seems like they're expensive enough. I don't think that's the way we should get health insurance for kids."

Kelly Paul, 34, Republican, Tigard: "I'd say he's doing a good job. I wouldn't want anyone else. I'm a teacher, and he sides with education."

Kulongoski: Funding for higher ed may cause standoff

Continued from Page One

"He's a rock star," crowned Portland environmental lobbyist Stephen Kafoury, jazzed by Kulongoski's all-out effort to pass expansive tax credits for renewable and alternative energy in Oregon. "He has just come alive this session."

Even Republicans note the difference. "It's night and day," says Senate Minority Leader Ted Ferrioli. R-John Day, Ferrioli tempers his remarks, however, by saying the difference is Kulongoski is following a "script" written for him by labor leaders.

Of course, Kulongoski retains a wide circle of critics. Conservatives fault his zeal for new taxes. Evangelicals oppose his support of civil unions for same-sex couples. And, as Ferrioli's comment suggests, there's mounting concern about the governor's close ties to public employee unions.

But snide asides about his leadership style — commonplace during Gov. O. O. have mostly gone away. The changing attitudes toward Kulongoski reflect his conscious strategy to be more accessible this time and an acknowledgment that he's on track for his most successful session yet.

New era, new opportunities

It's not hard to figure out why. In his first term, Kulongoski fought a budget-sapping recession and a split Legislature, divided not just by party labels but by deep ideological conflicts. This time, he's been handed Oregon's biggest budget surplus since statehood and a Legislature in which his Democratic colleagues control both the House and Senate.

Oregon's new political landscape doesn't guarantee Kulongoski will get all he wants out of this session. But he could come close.

Already, the governor has celebrated an agreement on Oregon's first-ever rainy day fund, paid for in part by suspending corporate "kicker" tax refunds — a Kulongoski proposal. He signed a long-sought bill to pool teacher health insurance plans, instead of leaving them to individual districts.

And his proposals to offer tax credits in support of wind turbines, biofuel and other renewable and alternative energy sources have been moving swiftly through the Legislature.

Still pending are his proposals to offer health plans to uninsured children by raising cigarette taxes and his request to raise the minimum taxes paid by corporations, with the money funding Head Start for all preschoolers who qualify.

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says, Oregonians already have voiced their support for his priorities.

"I ran a campaign for a year talking about these very issues," Kulongoski said. "And I said if I was elected, this is what I was going to do."

During his first term, Kulongoski was dogged by criticism that he wasn't forceful enough in pushing for big issues he and his Democratic supporters cared most about, such as environmental protection and tax reforms aimed at making business pay a bigger share. He developed a reputation, especially during the 2005 legislative session, for being disengaged.

"Last session, the guy was barely perceptible," Ferrioli says. "We were thinking about putting his picture on a milk carton."

This time, Kulongoski has played a much more hands-on role, Ferrioli says. However, the main beneficiaries have been unions and environmental groups — those who backed Kulongoski's re-election effort.

"He's been extremely effective for his constituencies," Ferrioli says, "but I don't think that includes all the people of the state."

Since his re-election, in which he beat Republican challenger Ron Saxton by seven percentage points, Kulongoski clearly has been much more visible at the Capitol, holding news conferences, attending rallies and testifying on bills.

And he seems to be enjoying himself more. First-term reports of the governor brooding in his office haven't resurfaced this year. Previously, many at the Capitol wondered whether the governor's policy of attending all military funerals took a mental toll. That question hasn't come up this session.

Richter Taylor, the governor's spokeswoman, says the governor started changing his approach shortly after the 2005 session ended. She rejects the criticism that he was out of touch, saying Kulongoski spent much of his time working behind the scenes to balance the fractured state budget.

But she acknowledges that the governor talked about "lessons learned" during his first term, deciding the public wants — and deserves — more tangible evidence of his work.

"During the interim, he started meeting regularly with lawmakers," Richter Taylor says, "having them over to Mahonia Hall (the governor's Salem mansion), sometimes in large groups with spouses, sometimes in very small groups to talk about policy."

Those meetings continue and have helped produce a smoother session, Richter Taylor says.

It would be surprising if Kulongoski didn't get some kind of popularity bump — most politicians do after they're re-elected, says independent Portland pollster Tim Hibbitts. Hibbitts says he doubts most Oregonians have drawn a connection yet between Kulongoski and progress so far in the legislative session.

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Portland

County faces \$438,000 bill on 37

A judge has ordered Multnomah County to pay \$438,000 in legal fees to Dorothy English, the tough-talking grandma who helped pass Measure 37.

But the decision, handed down last week by Multnomah Circuit Judge Jerry B. Hodson, doesn't settle the dispute over English's forested property.

The two sides have sparred over English's Measure 37 claim since 2004. County officials agreed to let English create eight lots, but she said she shouldn't have to file modern land-use applications to build.

Last year the spat went to court. The verdict: The county wasn't treating the land as if it were 1953, when English bought it. English and the county agreed to value the Measure 37 claim at \$1.15 million.

English's attorney, Donald Joe Willis, says a check is in order. County attorneys say they need to pay only if no development agreement is reached.

Enter new County Commission Chairman Ted Wheeler, who offered to fast-track construction and waive fees. Willis says the deal isn't totally fair, but "we're still willing to talk to them."

Meanwhile, Measure 37 says governments must pay "reasonable" legal fees if land-use rules still apply after 180 days, forcing a case to court. Willis says the \$438,000 award is a good step.

It's unclear whether the county will appeal.

—Laura Oppenheimer

Vancouver

Downtown shaper leaving city post

Steve Burdick, who helped shape the resurgence of downtown Vancouver, will leave the city as economic development director at the end of April, the city announced Wednesday.

Burdick has held the position for 10 years.

This was the second time Burdick, a Willamette University graduate, has worked for the city. From 1984 to 1990, he was the project manager for Officers Row and represented the city in public-private partnership agreements for Riverview Tower and the Evergreen Retirement Inn.

After seven years with Key Property Services, Burdick returned to the city in 1997. He managed the Vancouver Convention Center and Hilton Hotel project and, through 2005, the rehabilitation of the West Barracks. Burdick also represented the city in public-private partnership agreements for Heritage Place, Vancouvercenter, West Coast Bank Building, Kirkland Union Manor, Lewis and Clark Plaza and Esther Short Commons.

—Allan Brettman

Vancouver

Meningococcal disease confirmed in death

Clark County public health officials confirmed Wednesday that a teenager died early Sunday of meningococcal disease.

Dr. Alan Melnick, county health officer, declined to reveal the teen's identity, but said the 16-year-old girl became ill at home Saturday and died in a hospital early Sunday. The teen showed the hallmark symptoms of the disease: a high fever, confusion and a purple, spotty rash that does not disappear when pressed.

A family member said the girl was home-schooled. Melnick said people who had contact with the teen were treated with preventive medication.

Meningococcal disease is

Oregon senators back move against troop rise

Iraq | The Democrat and Republican say they'll support a bipartisan resolution

By **MATTHEW DALY**
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Oregon's two senators said Thursday they will support a bipartisan resolution against President Bush's plan to increase U.S. troop presence in Iraq.

Republican Sen. Gordon Smith and Democratic Sen. Ron Wyden said they would

co-sponsor a measure advanced by Sen. John Warner, R-Va., and a bipartisan group of lawmakers. It says the Senate "disagrees with the 'plan' to augment our forces by 21,500," and urges the president instead to consider all options and alternatives.



Wyden

Says support for resolution building



Smith

Trying to forge a middle ground

That criticism was jettisoned

an infection of the fluid in the spinal cord and surrounding the brain. It can be spread through respiratory and throat secretions by coughing or kissing.

—Holley Gilbert

Vancouver

Foes of asphalt plant lose appeal of its OK

A Clark County land-use hearing examiner has ruled that a final environmental impact statement "adequately considered the probable significant adverse environmental impacts" of a proposed asphalt plant in Brush Prairie.

Examiner Joe Turner denied an appeal of the county's decision to allow the Lakeside Industries plant on a 16.24-acre tract, between Northeast 151st Street and Northeast Caples Road, east of State Route 503.

John Karpinski, the lawyer representing plant opponents, said he would appeal the hearing examiner's decision to the Board of Clark County Commissioners.

Opponents have challenged the plant because of noise, odor and traffic concerns.

—Allan Brettman

Vancouver

Schools chief named for Ridgefield district

Art C. Edergerly, superintendent of Wapato Public Schools, has been named superintendent of the Ridgefield School District. He will join the 2,037-student district July 1.

Edergerly has served as head of the Wapato district south of Yakima since 2001.

As Wapato superintendent, he oversees 445 employees and an annual budget of \$28.6 million. The district's enrollment is 3,288.

Ridgefield employs at least 120 and has an annual budget of \$13.2 million.

Edergerly earned a bachelor's degree at the University of Washington, a master's degree from the University of Portland and a school administrator's certificate from Seattle Pacific University.

—Holley Gilbert

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