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 by giving one to others...  
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Ted Kulongoski

Photo by Mark Pynes

## State must maintain higher ed, says Kulongoski at conference

By Ron Hunt  
 Of the Emerald

"People believe higher education doesn't deliver a service — that it's 'fat,'" says Sen. Ted Kulongoski, D-Junction City, candidate for governor. "I disagree with that."

Kulongoski — speaking at a Thursday afternoon press conference in Eugene — also said he anticipates another special session of the Legislature this year, where "the major approach will be budget-cutting." Legislators will not likely increase taxes again or cut deeper into property tax relief. "That's the real danger."

While further budgetary dilemmas loom in the future, the quality of higher education must be maintained, he said. The "most dramatic" part of Oregon's system is that three major universities — PSU, OSU, and the University — are funded through the state's general fund, Kulongoski said. There are a "variety of alternatives" for other four-year institutions, he said; directing Portland State students to attend community college for their first two years would be one option.

But the extent of change required in higher education depends on the underlying problem of state finances, Kulongoski said. "The issue is the revenue source to fund state government."

Oregon ranks first in the United States in dependence on personal income tax revenues, Kulongoski said, adding that Oregon is 16 percentage points

ahead of the second place state. It's a "critical issue" because 75 percent of all monies in the state's general fund comes from personal income tax, he said.

A "progressive approach to the income tax table" is needed, Kulongoski said — such as the tax plan of Rep. Margie Hendriksen, D-Eugene, and his plan to close up loopholes for those with income more than \$50,000. (Hendriksen's tax proposal would lower tax rates on single returns for people with incomes below \$11,000, while those with incomes above that level would pay at a higher rate. Tax rates would range from 3 to 15 percent.)

The key issue for Oregon in the next decade, however, will revolve around utility rates. "Any leader must look out into the future," he said. Kulongoski — chairer of the Senate Energy Committee — criticized the Bonneville Power Administration and Gov. Vic Atiyeh for their respective roles in the Washington Public Power Supply System "tragedy."

With the termination of nuclear plants four and five (of the five-plant system), he said, the question now is, "What about one, two and three?" Although plant number two is 90 percent complete, are plants one and three needed — will they even be built, Kulongoski asked. There is a "serious question" if plant two will ever be fueled, he added.

"When you look down the road the question always will be

the need for the five reactors."

The BPA administrators like to say they had no part in the WPPSS project, Kulongoski said, but a 1976 BPA letter told public utilities that no power could be guaranteed after 1983 — readying utilities for the WPPSS campaign. The BPA has failed to produce a forecast of power needs for the region, he added.

Kulongoski questioned the handling of WPPSS: "Didn't anyone ever review the technology?" The project was not economically feasible, he said, adding that no one has attempted to build five nuclear plants at one time. Terminating plants is not unusual, however, because the Tennessee Valley Authority has killed six of them and 20 to 30 plants have been shut down elsewhere in the United States, Kulongoski said.

The question now is how to alleviate the burden for those — like the Springfield Utility Board — obligated to pay for plants four and five, he said, adding that his committee will continue to hold hearings on the subject. Unless a definite need is shown, Kulongoski said, plants one and three should be "deferred."

The BPA is "sandbagging" its conservation program and wants to charge local utilities for saved kilowatts, he said. "If we conserve, they lose revenue."

Kulongoski, who announced his candidacy for governor Wednesday night, said he plans to complete a statewide tour Friday with a visit to eastern Oregon.

emu Food Service



Next Beer Garden

# FRIDAY March 12