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COMMUNITY
Candidate aims for education

By Mandy Baucum
Oregon Daily Emerald

In a speech announcing his candidacy for the state senate, Democrat Tom Atkinson outlined education funding as his main campaign goal at Washington Elementary School Monday.

"I am very concerned that in today's environment there simply are not enough teachers to provide the individual attention that I received and that more students are slipping through the cracks," Atkinson said. "I am also concerned that Oregon is lagging far behind in bringing modern educational resources into our classrooms. Our kids deserve better."

Asked if he believed higher education is taking too many budget cuts, Atkinson answered yes.

"I have a great fondness for the University," Atkinson said, reminding reporters that he holds a bachelor's degree from the University.

Another of Atkinson's campaign goals was public safety. He criticized Senate Bill 139, passed in the last legislative session, which made short prison sentences even shorter.

"As our state senator, I will work hard to prevent Oregon from becoming a major West Coast drug and crime center," he said.

Atkinson, a Springfield resident, said education and public safety are his most important goals and the remaining issues will be subject to most of the budget cuts.

Although the local unemployment rate has dropped during the last several months, Atkinson said the job growth has been mainly in the areas of domestic



WILSON CHAN for the Emerald

Tom Atkinson, a candidate for the state Senate, named education his main campaign goal at Washington Elementary School Monday.

help and self-employment.

"To me, family-wage job growth is not more housekeepers," he said. "As our state senator, I will vote to use lottery funds for what they were intended — more family-wage jobs for Oregonians."

Atkinson also emphasized campaign funding reform as a goal. He said he would not accept donations of more than \$100 from Political Action Committees outside of the Eugene-Springfield area.

Atkinson said he also had a solution to the controversial requests of the Oregon Citizens Alliance.

As senator, Atkinson said he would propose a state constitutional amendment guaranteeing all Oregonians the right to live free of discrimination and that he

would reaffirm the state constitutional restriction on special rights for anyone.

"Equal rights for everyone, special rights for no one," he said.

In the May Democratic primaries, Atkinson expects to run against incumbent Sen. Bill Dwyer, who has not yet publicly announced his candidacy.

Atkinson said the reason he has decided to run against Dwyer is because he believed the senator was uncompromising. As an example, he spoke of Dwyer's unwillingness to reconsider his anti-sales tax stance.

"That was not the kind of leadership I wanted to see," he said. "I have chosen to run because the state Senate has become totally ineffective in solving these major problems facing our state."

Committee considers funding issue

By Meg Dedolph
Oregon Daily Emerald

A Lane County committee on funding for human services is considering two options to ensure a steady source for the \$2.3 million needed yearly to maintain human service programs in Lane County.

Currently, funding for human services in Lane County, which benefit the homeless, jobless and disabled as well as families and children, comes from the county, and the cities of Eugene and Springfield.

"We decided last June with Measure 5 and the instability of timber revenue it was necessary to establish stable funding for human services," said Steve Manela, a county staff member who works with the Ad Hoc Committee for Human Service Funding.

Currently, the committee is suggesting either a business license tax or a tax on amusement and entertainment. Both suggestions are still relatively unrefined; no specific details have been worked out.

An amusement and entertainment tax, common in other parts of the country, is appealing because it would affect a broad segment of the population. The tax's discretionary nature is also an asset — it doesn't tax services or products necessary for survival.

A business license tax, if it were implemented, would apply to anyone wanting a business license in Lane County, regardless of the business size.

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