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Blue jean-clad Kitzhaber takes top office

Inauguration:

Kitzhaber outlines goals, Roberts says 'goodbye'

Kaly Soto
Oregon Daily Emerald

"My friends, we walk this path together. As long as we live within these borders, and share in the blessings and bounties of this small green corner of God's earth, we owe something in return. We owe something to each other. What we get, we must give back in equal measure. Let us begin today — one state ... one people ... one destiny."

—John Kitzhaber

The weather outside the state Capitol building was dark and wet, but the mood inside was one of joy as John Kitzhaber took the oath of office as Oregon's 35th governor.

Before his new wife, his parents, the state legislature, the Oregon Supreme Court, and hundreds of onlookers, Kitzhaber promised to hold himself and other government employees accountable for their actions and to cooperate with the new Republican-led legislature.



GARY GRASS/Emerald

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John Kitzhaber with new wife Sharon at his side is sworn in as Oregon's 35th governor by Circuit Court Judge Pro Tempore Donald Doh.



HIDEKI TOMEOKA/Emerald

Eugene Mayor Ruth Bascom outlines her goals.

Mayor to concentrate on development plans

Goals: Bascom will focus on environment, high speed rail

Ben Moebius
Oregon Daily Emerald

Mayor Ruth Bascom held the concept of sustainable development as her focus for the next two years at the State of the City address Monday.

Bascom vowed that economic and environmental concerns could be reconciled, during her speech in the Hult Center lobby. She said both issues are important to the future of Eugene. She offered the West Eugene wetlands and various outlying development projects as exam-

ples where sustainable environment could help.

Bascom also spoke about the success of the high speed rail project through the Cascadia Corridor from Vancouver B.C. to Eugene. The Mount Rainier train, which now connects Eugene to Seattle, beat its projected number of passengers for the first month of operation by 2,600.

Bascom announced that the Pacific Northwest will make a bid for the Summer Olympics of 2004, hosting games in cities throughout the Cascadia Corridor. The high speed rail would work as the quick, efficient connection that would make multicity games possible, Bascom said.

GOOD MORNING

► TUCSON, Ariz. (AP) — Graceful red dunes and volcanic rocks spread carefully over a courtyard on the campus of the University of Arizona are the practice grounds for a \$150 million robot mission to Mars, America's third visit to the red planet.

If the little bit of Mars works as planned, it will help develop the equipment for NASA's Mars Pathfinder mission set for launch next year.

Staff and students at Arizona's Lunar and Planetary Laboratory shoveled 79 tons of orange-red soil into a courtyard of a classroom building and then sculptured it into a gently rippled plain resembling a river valley on Mars. Volcanic rocks from nearby mountains completed the barren scene.

In March, more than 40 international space scientists will gather at the Marscape to test, for the second time, the Pathfinder mission equipment.

Mars Pathfinder is due for launch next December and is scheduled to touchdown in a place called the Ares Tiu Outflow Valley on July 4, 1997.

The mission is a showcase of NASA's concept of smaller, quicker and cheaper voyages of exploration.

Measure 8 issue has long history

PERS: Debate over controversial measure depends on history of public retirement funds

Marcelene Edwards
Oregon Daily Emerald

Though the debate surrounding the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) may have seemed new when Measure 8 was introduced last spring, the PERS program has a long history.

Measure 8, which Oregon voters approved by a slim margin last November, requires public employees to contribute 6 percent of their salaries to their pension funds. Opponents of the measure say the history of PERS will be the key to the constitutional undoing of the measure.

The PERS system began in 1946 when employers in the public sector realized that they wanted to hire people who were qualified, then they had to provide a retirement plan, said David Bailey, deputy director of PERS.

The plan began as a defined contribution system where a member would put money in, invest it and then get that money back. Now it is a defined benefit system where employees are told they are going to get a determined amount of their salary.

The controversial part of the PERS system has its roots in a

1979 dispute between public employees and the state over wages. At that time the government was receiving "a lot of pressure from employees" for a raise, Bailey said.

Public employees had not received a raise in quite some time and wanted some type of compensation.

Management decided to take over the payment into the PERS, which would, in essence, give the employee a 6 percent raise.

The contribution wouldn't cost employers 6 percent because they wouldn't have to pay taxes on it, Bailey said.

Here's how the system worked in its pre-Measure 8 state: Employers would pay the 6 percent directly into a retirement fund for workers.

Here's how the system functions now: The money goes to employees and then to the pension fund. Employees put 6 percent into their retirement fund that, along with the employer contribution, is invested by the State Treasurer Jim Hill.

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