

PENSION

Continued from Page 1

The average employer contribution is around 9 percent, and the total contribution equals about 15 percent.

PERS employees project the amount of money they are going to need to pay the pensions and tell the employer how much they need to contribute to make up the difference. The state treasurer figures out how the money will become the amount promised to each employee. "It is about half of the average salary the employee received in the last years they work," Bailey said of the final benefits.

PERS sends the money to the state treasurer's office. The treasurer then sends the money to a private firm to be invested, said Randal Edwards, executive assistant to the state treasurer.

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KITZHABER

Continued from Page 1

"Our success depends on our willingness to respect our differences, on our willingness to strive to understand other points of view, and our willingness to recognize that our most critical challenges have nothing to do with partisan politics and everything to do with the future of Oregon — our future."

Kitzhaber's state-of-the-state address was much less specific than it was hopeful. He outlined goals of providing a stable school system from pre-Kindergarten through higher education, improving public safety, helping those in need, and not increasing taxes. But he provided few concrete details as to how he would accomplish any of these things.

Instead, he stressed bipartisan cooperation and criticized the partisan power plays that paralyzed the legislature last year.

"Today we stand perilously close to the brink of a chasm, and all our minds and all our energies have been concentrated on avoiding a fall. But with courage and honesty, with cooperation and balance, we can again find ourselves poised on the wings of promise to take flight toward our highest aspirations," Kitzhaber said.

He also made it clear that he understood he would have to accomplish his goals without the benefit of raising taxes.

"If we are not to raise taxes, then we need an economy that thrives — not just in the Willamette Valley, but everywhere in Oregon — to provide the revenue to fund essential services."

After the ceremony, Kitzhaber, who wore his trademark blue jeans for the inauguration, said he felt "very good" about his new position.

Kitzhaber also said members of his staff were in the process of putting together their plans for the corrections system and economic development. He said the details would be released in a few weeks.

Laura Silverman, a Portland Community College Student who works as an intern for the Oregon Railroad Association said she hopes Kitzhaber's ideas on economic development will be in sync with those of the Railroad Association.

"This new administration will be diverse. I hope things will work out for (Kitzhaber). And certainly I am happy about the change in majority at the statehouse."

However, she said she was trying not get her hopes up.

"We are trying not to over or under estimate about anything."

Roberts relieved

"And the ordinary citizens of this state — who are, in fact, not ordinary at all. I've worked with them, debated with them, marched with them, celebrated with them, mourned and cried with them. They are not ordinary at all."

—Barbara Roberts



Barbara Roberts, who received a standing ovation as she entered the house chamber, waves goodbye. Roberts said her plans for the future are indefinite, but she plans to sleep late today.

As John Kitzhaber said hello to the governor's office and tested his new chair, Barbara Roberts said good-bye.

In her farewell remarks, Roberts warmly thanked the citizens of the state, but she denounced the partisan policies that crippled her administration.

The theme of her speech was responsibility and she was clear in saying last year's legislature had not lived up to theirs.

"Oregon is not a whim. Oregon is not a political football ... This state is not a commodity to be traded off or bartered away by any group of citizens or elected officials. This state is a legacy that all three million Oregonians hold in trust and the time has come for each of us to take the obligation to heart."

Like Kitzhaber, Roberts' speech centered around the themes of tolerance and cooperation, but instead of the hopeful tone of Kitzhaber's speech Roberts sounded like an embattled warrior who was ready for the end of the fight.

The bright spots in her speech were reserved for thank-yous to friends, family, her late husband, and her staff.

"Where we experienced real Oregon successes, I feel proud of what this administration was able to accomplish. Where we fell short, it was never for lack of trying or an unwillingness to take risks."

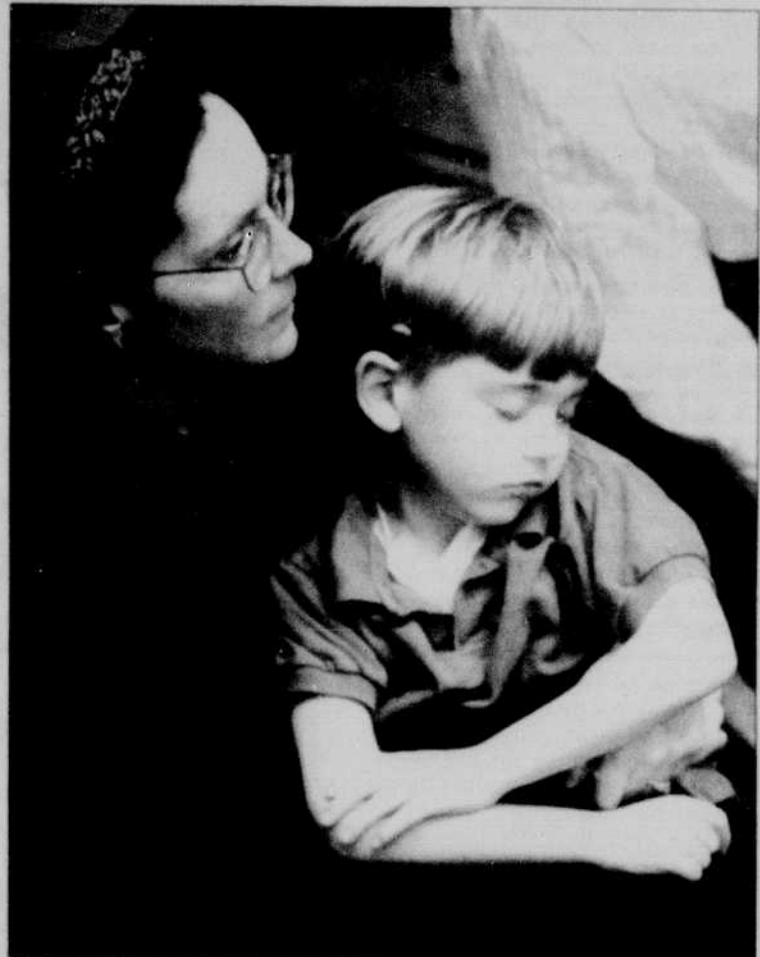
"I have been privileged to be your governor. I have been honored to serve you," Roberts said.

Following the ceremony Roberts joined other guests at Kitzhaber's informal reception.

She said she was relieved to be leaving office.

"Vic Atiyeh said it would be like a huge load would come off my shoulders, a load I didn't even know I was carrying. He was right."

Roberts plans to spend the next two or three months in Portland relaxing. And she said she would be sleeping in this morning.



Members of the House brought family members to the inauguration ceremony. Some found it more interesting than others.

Trust fund unveiled

In other legislative news Senate President Gordon Smith unveiled his plan for an education trust fund.

In his remarks before the inaugural crowd Smith, a Republican from Pendleton, said he would like to see the trust fund reach \$3 billion by the end of the century.

Smith said the money would be raised by selling some state assets, using excess lottery profits and keeping

some or all of a tax refund that businesses usually get. In Smith's plan a \$3 million trust fund could be built in the next five years that would yield \$300 million a year in interest for Oregon schools.

Both he and House Speaker Bev Clarno echoed Kitzhaber's sentiment of cooperation during their speeches, pledging to go against the governor only when principle demanded it.



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