

"With the tough problems they have, Kitzhaber and the Republican leaders know they have to work together."

— Jim Moore  
political science professor at the University of Portland.

"The governor demonstrated that he thinks Oregon will only be a quality place to live only if all of us pay more taxes."

— Bill Sizemore  
Anti-tax crusader

"I get to go home after this. These guys have to stay."

— Former Gov. Vic Atiyeh  
after listening to opening speeches by Kitzhaber and the GOP leaders.

"I would direct that bill to the deepest hole you can find."

— Senate President Brady Adams  
when asked about a possible move to cancel a \$383 million income tax rebate without first going to the voters.

"I believe he wants to work with us, and I know we want to work with him."

— House Speaker Lynn Lundquist  
after listening to Kitzhaber's state-of-the-state address.

# THE STATE-OF-THE-STATE

## Oregon Legislature begins 1997 session

By Brad Cain  
The Associated Press

SALEM — With a daunting list of challenges ahead, the 1997 Oregon Legislature convened today for a session that will be dominated by the Measure 47 property tax limit.

The House convened 20 minutes late at 8:49 a.m., officially opening Oregon's 69th legislative assembly.

The Senate convened shortly after 10 a.m.

The two chambers then met in joint session in the House chamber to hear speeches from the Legislature's Republican leaders as well as Gov. John Kitzhaber's state-of-the-state talk.

Despite their partisan differences, Kitzhaber and the GOP leaders said they believe they ultimately will be able to agree on adequate funding for schools, roads improvements, parks and stream cleanup.

Oregon voters handed the 1997 Legislature a big job when they approved the Measure 47 property tax limit last fall.

Lawmakers in the coming session will be required to interpret the technical details of the tax limit and figure out what to do about the \$1 billion hole it leaves for schools and local governments.

The tax limit will put a squeeze on state government's finances, since there is consensus among lawmakers that the Legislature will make up for most of the \$450 million schools will lose under Measure 47.

## State: Governor will not increase gas tax

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costs in the past few years.

It is important that decisions on salaries are made by the same level of government that makes the financing decisions, the governor said.

"For that reason, I believe it is time to consider seriously establishing a statewide teacher salary schedule so that there is better control and accountability for the single largest cost of education," he said.

Kitzhaber said he also will seek to institute a system of performance-based incentives for teachers and administrators and will propose removing "barriers to the use of teachers' assistants, volunteers and experts in the community — not as a way to try and reduce the number of teachers, but as a way to provide them with additional help and tools in the classroom."

The governor used quality of life as the theme of his speech and focused also on transportation and natural resources.

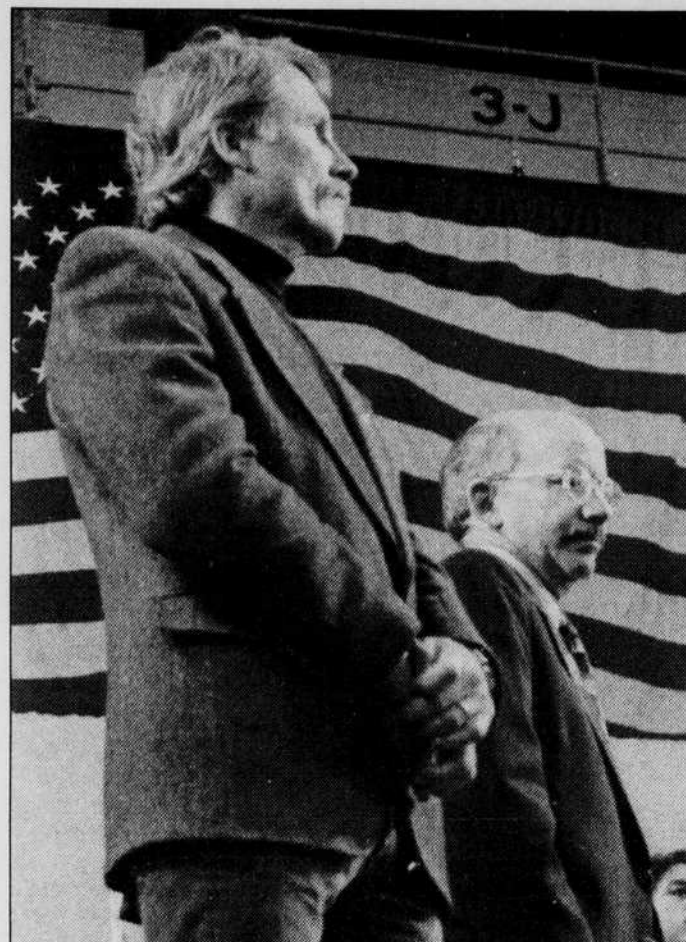
He outlined a plan he unveiled last month that would base highway fees on mileage driven and said the state will take the lead in trying to reduce traffic in the Portland area.

Kitzhaber said he will not propose any gasoline tax increase except possibly to tie it to inflation.

"I am proposing that we begin to move toward a system where motorists actually pay based on how many miles they drive — not just how much gas they use," he said. "I believe this will give people the incentives they need to explore alternatives to driving or to drive in different ways."

Kitzhaber said he has directed the Department of Administrative Services to create by May 1 a plan to reduce the state's share of traffic congestion in the Portland area.

On natural resources, Kitzhaber said he



FILE PHOTO

"I believe it is time to consider seriously establishing a statewide teacher salary schedule so that there is better control and accountability for the single largest cost of education."

— John Kitzhaber  
Oregon Governor

Gov. Kitzhaber proposed his budget to the Legislature.

wants to establish an investments fund for stream restoration to "give our salmon, trout and steelhead a fighting chance at dodging extinction."

He said the account "will also give us the ability to rebuild and retain one of the nation's great parks systems."

He said he is not willing to stand by and let a state park system "a century in the building, dwindle over the course of a decade."

Kitzhaber in his proposed budget has advocated a beverage container tax to pay for the natural resources efforts.

### SOME NEW BILLS INTRODUCED MONDAY IN THE OREGON LEGISLATURE

■ Extend mail voting to primary and general elections, HB200, at request of secretary of state.

■ Allow Public Utility Commission to impose fines up to \$10,000 on telephone carriers that violate state service quality standards, at request of PUC.

■ Require personal information, including name, address and phone number, on driver licenses and vehicle title and registrations to not be publicly released, HB2096, at request of state Transportation Department.

■ Eliminate refunds of excess corporate income tax collections, HB2057, at request of Rep. George Eighmey.

■ Allow income tax credits for employers that provide scholarships to employees and dependents, SB59, at request of State Scholarship Commission.

■ Prohibit state lottery from advertising games in broadcast or print, SB16, at request of Sen. John Lim.

■ Allow self-employed taxpayers to subtract 80 percent of health insurance costs in figuring taxable income, SB15, at request of Sen. John Lim, R-Gresham.

■ Create statewide licensing standards for social card games, HB2195, at request of Governor's Task Force on Gaming.

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Tuesday, February 25, 11-1:30

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