

Bush: College Republicans pleased with speech

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policies such as the No Child Left Behind Act help "end the soft bigotry of low expectations," adding that he wants to continue to close the achievement gap for minority students and expand funding for Federal Pell Grants.

Bush also presented his economic policy, emphasizing his support for small businesses and criticizing Kerry for a "pattern" of raising taxes.

"He can run from his record, but

he can't hide," he said.

"The problem is, to keep that promise he will have to break all his other ones," Bush said, referring to Kerry's promise during the last debate not to raise taxes for small businesses or the middle class.

Bush said he promised to cut taxes and kept his word, adding that he will work with Congress to keep taxes low and stressing that small businesses are the heart of the American economy.

Bush said the economy is picking up, with lower unemployment than

in the past three decades and with about four million new jobs added nationally, with 40,000 new jobs in Oregon since 2002.

Bush defended his plans for the war on terrorism, saying America is leading other nations to democracy and fighting so other countries no longer "breed violence for export."

"In defending ourselves, we have freed 50 million people," he said.

Junior Keith Bryan, a member of the College Republicans, traveled to the event with four other University students. Bryan said he was in the front row of the VIP section and was able to shake the president's hand.

"That's amazing," he said.

Bryan said it was "really well worth it" to wait all day to see the president, calling the rally "a great push for the last few weeks of the election year."

Bryan said he thought Bush's points about education and the economy were particularly key.

"That's very important because it all gets lost in the Iraq talk," he said.

Junior Annie Kyser, also a College Republican, said the rally was inspiring.

"I was crying," she said. "It's like the most amazing thing I've ever heard."

She said students who dislike Bush should judge the president after seeing him firsthand.

"Inform yourself not just with conspiracy theories and things circulating on the Internet," she said. "Do the research."

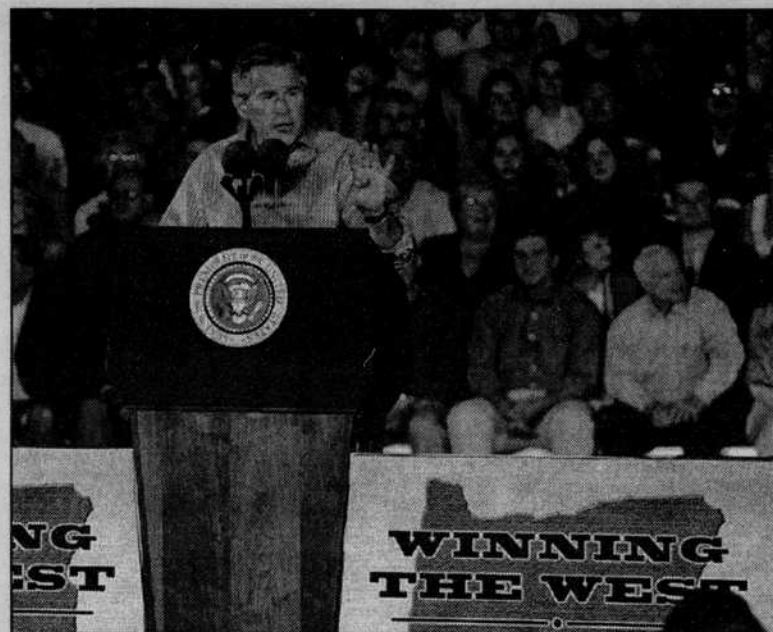
She said the president spoke to average people, adding that the most moving part of Bush's speech was when he said a 19-year-old girl was the first Afghani citizen to cast a vote in the country's recent elections.

Meghan Wimer, 50, traveled from Sisters to attend the rally and support a man she says is "doing the best job possible." Bush's obvious love for his wife, Laura, is also a driving factor in her support, she said.

"I judge a man by the woman he marries," she said.

Some people who attended the rally dissented, however. One man stood on a barricade behind the VIP section wearing an anti-Bush T-shirt and with a Bush campaign sticker taped over his mouth. Several Bush supporters held up signs to obscure the man from the podium, who was soon removed by the Secret Service.

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DANIELLE HICKEY | PHOTO EDITOR

Hundreds of people waited eight hours to see President George W. Bush on an hour-long stop in Central Point on Thursday.

Police fire on Oregon crowd with pepper balls

JACKSONVILLE — Police in riot gear fired paintballs filled with cayenne pepper Thursday night to disperse a crowd of protesters assembled in this historic gold mining town where President Bush was spending the night after a campaign appearance.

Witnesses said Bush supporters were on one side of California Street chanting "Four more years," and supporters of Democratic presidential nominee Sen. John Kerry were on the other chanting "Three more weeks." Police began moving the crowd away from the Jacksonville Inn, where the president was to arrive for a dinner and to spend the night following his speech.

"We were here to protest Bush and show our support for Kerry," said Cerridewen Bunten, 24, a college student and retail clerk from Ashland. "Nobody was being violent. We were out of the streets so cars could go by. We were being loud, but I never knew that was against the law."

Bunten said she was pushed by police as she held her 6-year-old daughter.

Jeff Treadwell, 37, an auto mechanic from Medford who joined the protesters, estimated about

500 people were assembled, counting both Bush and Kerry supporters.

Jacksonville City Administrator Paul Wyntergreen said the protest was peaceful until a few people started pushing police. Police reacted by firing pepperballs, which he described as projectiles like a paintball filled with cayenne pepper. Two people were arrested for failing to disperse. There were no reports of injuries.

Richard Swaney, 65, of Central Point, said he had joined in a peaceful protest outside the Jackson County fairgrounds where Bush spoke, and then went to Jacksonville to join the protest there.

He said he was walking with the crowd away from the inn when he was hit in the back with three separate bursts, one of which knocked him down. He felt a stinging sensation he thought was rubber bullets and smelled pepper.

"I don't think I moved fast enough," Swaney said. "I can't believe this happens in the United States. It was very peaceful. I think this is the way tyranny begins."

Wyntergreen said no rubber bullets were fired, only pepperballs.

— The Associated Press

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