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Mayor Piercy shares goals in State of the City address

Sustainable development was among the key topics in the mayor's speech

BY RYAN KNUTSON
NEWS REPORTER

Eugene Mayor Kitty Piercy stressed environmental protection while maintaining economic success as a city goal for 2006 in her second State of the City address Thursday.

"Economic success and preservation of our natural resources have been pitted against each other," she said. "(They) can, and should, go hand in hand."

Addressing the standing-room-only crowd in the Hult Center's lobby, Piercy dubbed this concept "sustainable development," and she said it is "the cornerstone to my commitment" to the community. Piercy also pressed for the development of a hospital in Eugene's central core to conclude discussion on the renovation of the City Hall complex and address parking issues in downtown Eugene and traffic problems in West Eugene.

She also said she hoped to gain congressional support for building an environmental education center in the West Eugene wetlands, to put an independent auditor in place to review the Eugene Police Department and to develop a city council position to solve racial issues and homelessness.

"Most of these priorities will require continued commitment on the part of our city council and staff to make real changes for the people of our community," Piercy said.

Piercy also applauded the citizens for their engagement in civic affairs, some of which have been highly debated.

"High level of civic engagement is our asset not our detriment," she said. "I am proud of the thousands of citizens that take the time to communicate their views."

Hasang Cheon | Photographer

Eugene Mayor Kitty Piercy gave her State of the City address at the Hult Center on Thursday afternoon.

The audience at the speech gave two standing ovations and seemed enthusiastically supportive of the mayor's goals.

David Kelly, Eugene city councilor for the University area, said he too was optimistic for the upcoming year, which will be his last on the council. He announced in November that he would not seek re-election.

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"I think the climate is right for us to make major strides this year on the priority issues and on other areas as well."

Kelly also said he hoped to resolve traffic issues and stressed the importance of reaching a conclusion on the West Eugene Parkway.

"All of the other issues continue to be front and center for all of us," he said. "There is a lot more work needed on all of them."

Kelly said while all of the mayor's goals affect University students in some way, the police department reforms may affect University students the most because of students' frequent encounters with the law.

Kelly also commented on the priority to solve racial issues.

"With the UO student body, more diverse than the city as a whole, I certainly think anything we can do would impact the student body," he said.

Piercy also recapped the past year during her speech.

"We've had no lack of major civic issues to address," she said. "I have thoroughly enjoyed being your mayor."

The mayor also touched on the city's achievements and the progress of her eight priorities established last year, which included re-staffing Fire Station 9, passing a measure to enable police department review and creating a city identity by adopting the new motto, "World's Greatest City for the Arts and Outdoors."

She also touted the Launch Neighborhood Initiative to strengthen the city's ties to neighborhoods as a continuing achievement and singled out Staples, King Estates Winery, Organically Grown Co., Forrest Paint Co. and Lane Community College for their dedication to "community sustainability."

Contact the city, state politics reporter at rknutson@ dailyemerald.com

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