

ATKINSON

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"You are only as popular as the day before you announce (your candidacy)," Atkinson said.

The congressional candidate said he is a fiscal conservative and not opposing tax increases would be inconsistent with this philosophy. Atkinson said he also has strong conservative stances on abortion and the Second Amendment.

"I am 100% pro life and have an A+ rating from the NRA (National Rifle Association). These are easy topics for me, my mind is made up," he said.

He is seeking to succeed Rep. Greg Walden, the Republican from Hood River who is not running for reelection after serving for two decades. Atkinson

credits Walden with having an exemplary constituent service record and said he will try to emulate it.

"Eighty percent of the job is constituent service," Atkinson said.

He said it is critical to reach out to constituents because those who contact their Congressman often do so as a last resort.

"If someone calls with a problem, it is because their lawyer and their pastor could not fix it," Atkinson said.

The candidate said he would pull out all the stops to help constituents.

"I would manipulate things at the federal level to get stuff done," Atkinson said.

While Atkinson lives in Central Point, he said he has strong ties to Northeast Oregon because he has spent

much time here fly-fishing on the Grande Ronde River and hunting.

"I've spent more time on the Grande Ronde than I should have," Atkinson said with a smile.

Atkinson, who has a number of friends in Union and Wallowa counties, said he has long been interested in Eastern Oregon University, La Grande, partly because its administration building is almost identical to the one at Southern Oregon University in Ashland, which he lives near.

The candidate said it would mean very much for him to carry Union and Wallowa counties in the upcoming election because of his ties to the region.

"It will be a point of pride for me. I will be here (campaigning) a lot," Atkinson said.

CLIMATE

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and Eric Richardson, Eugene-Springfield NAACP president. Following speeches, the demonstrators marched around the Capitol chanting and waving signs baring messages supporting the climate legislation. The event, organized by the environmental group Renew Oregon, was a counterpart to a protest in Salem last week organized by Timber Unity.

Activists made the trek to Salem from all parts of the state Tuesday, including Dean Myerson who was part of a carload of demonstrators who drove three hours from The Dalles. Myerson said he believes Oregon needs to lead the way on climate action.

"We can't just wait for everybody else to do something first, which seems to be one of the arguments; 'we can't do this alone,' which is true, but somebody has to start," Myerson said. "In Wasco County we had a series of really bad fires a couple years ago. A lot of historic homes were destroyed, a farmer died... There's always been fires, but climate change is making them worse."

Maia Stout, a 15-year-old from coastal Yachats, explained to the crowd what climate action means to her. For the past several months, Stout — like 17-year-old

Swedish activist Greta Thunberg — has participated in the global youth climate strike, standing outside her high school in Newport every day Friday to bring attention to the issue.

"I advocate for climate action because I understand that the mistakes we've made don't fix themselves," Stout said. "I raised my voice because I can't vote for three more years and time is running out."

Coral Avery, 22, a student at Oregon State University, is an enrolled member of the Shawnee tribe of Oklahoma.

"Climate and natural resource use really goes back to indigenous people," Avery said. "That's the main reason why I'm here today, is to represent, the best I can, represent my community and other indigenous communities who have overall been left out of the conversation or at least haven't been centered in it before."

Avery, who is involved in student government at OSU, said that she has lobbied for climate legislation for four years, since moving to Oregon. She said she was "most hopeful" for the bill that was proposed last year but that it didn't protect rural communities.

"And I've heard that, through reading it, that it's been revised in some ways to better support them and look out for when things change when polluters are held accountable for their emissions," Avery said.

Oregon Kindergarten Assessment 2019-2020

District	Early Math (out of 16)	Approaches to Learning (rating 1-5)	Early Literacy (uppercase)	Early Literacy (lowercase)	Early Literacy (sound recog)
State	11.0	3.6	14.3	11.6	7.7
La Grande	12.1	3.6	15.7	12.4	9.9
Union	10.9	3.8	15.9	14.6	15.8
North Powder	13.1	3.8	20.2	17.5	14.9
Imbler	10.6	2.9	19.5	15.4	12.4
Cove	12.3	4.2	15.8	13.2	8.4
Elgin	11.8	3.4	15.2	11.8	9.8

Source: Oregon Department of Education

SCHOOLS

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kindergarten students at the school are focused on giving them an educational foundation.

"Kindergarten is the baseline," Dunlap said. "First through second grade is where they really turn things up."

Dunlap and Westenskow said the focus in kindergarten is acclimating children to a structured environment.

Oregon now has full-day kindergarten classes, and Westenskow said getting through the seven-hour day is sometimes the biggest challenge. Mixing students with different maturity and knowledge levels also can add hurdles.

Teacher aides and maintaining small class sizes that can break up into even smaller groups, the principals said, have helped Greenwood achieve success in teaching kindergartners.

"If we can get a kid to make it through the day, without falling asleep, who can act (in) socially acceptable (ways) and who has the basics of reading, writing and math, then that student is on track," Westenskow said.

According to Dalton, results can vary from school to school or district to district based upon a variety of factors, including socio-economic status, access to quality early childhood pro-

grams and experiences and students who speak English as a second language.

"They might vary from year to year because the assessment measures different cohorts of students," Dalton said of the changes in rates. "In addition, students could do better if more supports are provided each year."

La Grande School District has a kindergarten jump-start program for students who demonstrate a need for additional help and atten-

tion. Those young students can come into the school during the summer before classes begin to get used to the new environment.

Dunlap noted having good preschools in the area such as Heidi Ho in La Grande and Head Start can be beneficial to setting up a child for success. Westenskow said he has seen evidence that students are more successful when they have a supportive environment that encourages learning.

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THE NEA BIG READ 2020

When the Emperor was Divine

by Julie Otsuka



The NEA Big Read 2020 Schedule of Events

Wednesday, February 19, 7pm
KICKOFF: A Day of Remembrance with **Chisao Hata**
 Enterprise Christian Church - Enterprise, Free Admission

Sunday, February 23 - 2 pm
Japanese Tea Ceremony with **Kiyomi Oliver**
 Josephy Center for Arts and Culture, Free Admission

Tuesday, February 25 - 6pm
Oregon's Japanese Americans - OPB Documentary Screening and Discussion
 Fishtrap, Free Admission

Saturday, February 29 - 9-10:30am
Haiku Poetry Workshop with **Whitney Chandler**
 Fishtrap, Registration: Free - Limited to 12

Tuesday, March 3 - 12pm
How Do We Deal With Difference? Brownbag with **David Bruce**
 Josephy Center for Arts and Culture, Free Admission

Wednesday, March 4 - 10:30am
Book Discussion
 The Blythe Cricket, Joseph, Free Admission

Friday, March 7, 2-4pm
Big Read Youth Day
 Art Center East, La Grande, Free Admission

Tuesday, March 10 - 7pm
How Do We Deal With Difference? with **David Bruce**
 Wallowa City Hall, Free Admission

Wednesday, March 11 - 10:30am
Book Discussion
 Fishtrap, Free Admission

Sunday, March 15, 1-3pm
Tea in the Gallery: Japanese Teas
 Art Center East Gallery, La Grande, Registration \$20/\$25

Thursday, March 19 - 7pm
FINALE: Portland Taiko
 OK Theatre, Enterprise
 Adults: \$10 - Seniors: \$5 - Students: Free Admission

Friday, March 20 - 6:30-8:30pm
Snow Dye Shibori & Sake
 Art Center East Gallery, La Grande, Registration \$20/\$25

Friday, March 20 - 9am
Portland Taiko Drum Workshop
 Location TBD
 Registration: \$15 limited to 12

February 22, 29, March 7, 14 - 4-6pm
Union County Book Discussions
 JaxDog Cafe & Books, La Grande, Free Admission



For the full BIG READ schedule of events visit **FISHTRAP.ORG**

ART CENTER EAST | Wallowa County Cultural Trust Coalition | Japanese American Museum of Oregon | OREGON ARTS COMMISSION | NATIONAL ENDOWMENT for the ARTS | Community BANK | Pacific Power Foundation | WILD CARROT RENEWALS

NEA Big Read is a program of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest.