

...Transportation a hot topic at confab

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tax? Or an increase in vehicle registration and other user fees?

Metsger said that doing nothing would result in gridlock — and cost the state thousands of jobs and hundreds of millions of dollars a year.

“We have to make sure our economy moves — so that our economy doesn’t move somewhere else,” he said.

Metsger is promoting a combination of both a fuel tax and registration fee increase, but he said some politicians “are running to the exits” whenever transportation funding is broached. He said transportation funding should be a litmus test for construction unions as they make political endorsements. “There are a lot of people running for office who say they support transportation. You need to ask them what that means,” he said.

Oregon House Majority Leader Dave Hunt said his top priority for the 2009 Legislature will be transportation. “This will never poll well,” he said. “People don’t connect economy to roads. But you can’t have one without the other.”

Senate Majority Leader Richard Devlin said he would support a gas tax increase, but was unsure of what support he had among his Democratic caucus.

“We have to be smart about whatever we adopt. We will have to make it clear what we’re buying with that gas tax,” he said.

If somebody can make that case, Devlin said the Democratic caucus will

certainly consider it.

Former Oregon AFL-CIO president Tim Nesbitt, a top aide to Gov. Ted Kulongoski, said the governor has a full agenda as he heads into his last two years in office. The governor, Nesbitt said, will be seeking input from labor in shaping and moving that agenda, which includes energy, health care, transportation, and workforce training.

Nesbitt said the advantages Oregon has, such as its relatively low cost land and natural resources, a diverse workforce, and its location on the Pacific Rim, put the state in a good position to grow. “I would summarize that as the nation goes, Oregon will go one better, or even two better if we play our cards right in shaping our future,” Nesbitt said.

In convention business, delegates elected John Endicott, business manager of Plumbers and Fitters Local 290, as president of the OSBCTC, and they tapped Dave Town, assistant busi-

ness manager of Painters and Allied Trades Council 5, as vice president.

Only one resolution was introduced. It calls on the council to lobby Gov. Kulongoski, the Oregon Legislature and Oregon’s congressional delegation to support the Bradwood Landing liquefied natural gas terminal. The proposed LNG plant near Astoria already has a project labor agreement in place guaranteeing it will be union-built.

OSBCTC gave a \$750 scholarship to Sam King, the son of Plumbers and Fitters Local 290 member Michael King. Sam, a 4.0 student at Cottage Grove High School, will attend Stanford University. The scholarship is funded by Ferguson Wellman Capital Management Inc.

A \$500 scholarship went to Kirsten Anthony of Redmond. She is the daughter of Daniel Walker of Operating Engineers Local 701. She will attend Central Oregon Community Col-



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