

# Salem Report

By Brad Witt



The Legislature adjourned on July 8th, after five months of intense activity. Over the last couple of weeks I have been reviewing our

accomplishments, and although there is always more that could have been done, I am very proud of the work that we did in such a short period of time. In this newsletter, I'd like to briefly describe some of these accomplishments and outline actions that we took that I think will contribute to the continued growth of our economy.

When we began the session in February, we were nervously awaiting the May revenue forecast, which would help direct our budget priorities for the next two years. Thankfully, the forecast proved to be positive. After years of disinvestment, we knew that education would be our greatest priority. As reported in a previous newsletter, we were able to allocate almost \$1 billion more to our K-12 school districts than the previous budget, and we also strengthened Oregon's workforce development by investing in community colleges and apprenticeship programs. We also increased access to higher

education by providing ways for high school students to earn college credit, and by making college more affordable through increased grants in aid.

Another top priority was to support the slow but steady improvement in our business climate by growing jobs and strengthening the economy. This session was about reinvesting, rebuilding and rehiring. These efforts will promote economic growth in both rural and urban settings, and I expect District 31 to see some benefits from these actions. Here are just a few of the ways we did that:

- Invested in critical infrastructure and jobs programs including ConnectOregon, industrial lands readiness and Small Business Development Centers
- Invested in Oregon roads, bridges, ports and rail to keep our economy moving
- Supported Oregon workers and businesses by promoting use of local goods and services
- Promoted a level playing field for businesses and made it easier for small and minority-owned businesses to work with state government
- Positioned Oregon to make critical investments in the I-5 Bridge Replacement project
- Leveraged nearly \$1 billion worth of bonding capacity to put thousands of Oregonians to work on construction projects in every part of the state

In that same vein, we focused our attention on our local communities, the first places we turn to for services and

support but they are often the least well-funded. In District 31, it's protecting the environment while also bolstering opportunities for employment. Here are some actions that we took from the local point of view:

- Helped local governments fund economic development and infrastructure improvements so small businesses can grow and create family-wage jobs
- Partnered with counties to protect funding for critical services that rural Oregonians rely on
- Supported jobs in agriculture by strengthening the Farm to School program and bolstering growing industries with support for fermentation sciences
- Protected natural habitats and rural economies through balanced forest management

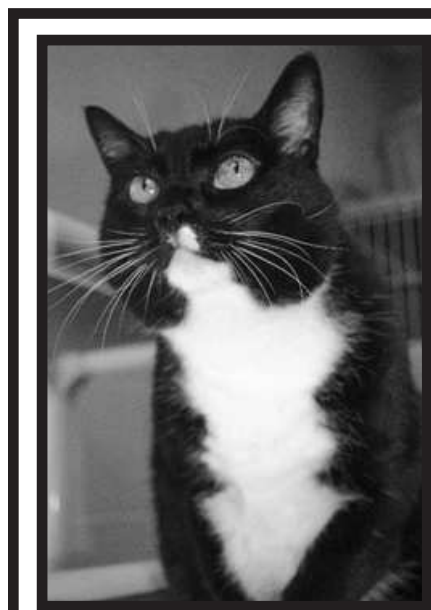
Needless to say, one of the best ways to make sure that the economy continues to grow on all levels is to make sure that every family has the support that it needs to prosper. No one can work or go to school if they do not feel secure, if they are hungry, or if they lack housing. Here are a few ways that we stood up for middle class families in Oregon:

- Helped families struggling to stay in their homes by expanding access to foreclosure mediation
- Improved access to affordable health care and strengthened our health care workforce statewide

- Strengthened public safety by prioritizing emergency services and resources for crime victims, including investments in mental health care and alcohol and drug treatment
- Improved Oregon's foster care system to be more responsive and accountable
- Strengthened the safety net, including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), in-home care for seniors, and Employment Related Day Care for working families
- Insured fair housing practices for low income families and added funding for veterans' housing

These pieces of legislation are only a fraction of the bills that we considered this session, but I hope it gives you some sense of the scope of issues that came before us. In September, November and January, we will be meeting for three days each month to prepare for our one month session in February 2014. This involves holding hearings and listening to the results of various task forces that have been working on special assignment. Until September, then, I hope to continue seeing you as I travel around the district, attending local fairs and celebrations. It is always the highlight of my summer!

Thanks for taking the time to read my newsletter...best wishes to everyone as we enjoy these last days of summer vacation!

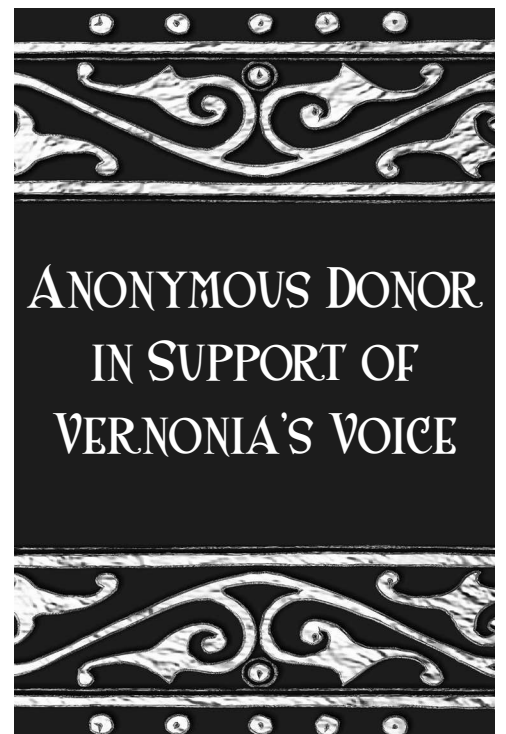


"Julie"

## Columbia Humane Society Featured Pet

Julie is a spayed female, black and white domestic short hair cat. She was adopted from the shelter approx. 10 years ago and then was returned to the shelter this year. Poor Julie thought she had her forever home and now finds herself up for adoption again. She has been at the shelter now for several months and will be difficult to adopt due to her color and age. Julie is super sweet and loves to purr and rub her head on you. She deserves to live out her last days in a loving home. If you have a place in your home and heart for this super sweet senior girl, please stop by the shelter to meet her. She is spayed, vaccinated, microchipped, leukemia tested, de-wormed, flea treated and qualifies for a free vet check. There is no adoption fee for Julie as we just want to find her a great home as soon as possible.

2084 Oregon Street, St. Helens, OR 97051 Phone: 503-397-4353  
E-mail: info@columbiahumane.org Web: www.columbiahumane.org



## Bridge Street Bits

THE VERNONIA SENIOR CENTER WISHES TO EXTEND OUR SINCERE SYMPATHY TO FRIENDS AND FAMILY OF DUKE GORTLER ON HIS RECENT PASSING. DUKE WILL BE MISSED AS LEADER AND ORGANIZER OF THE GOLDEN OLDIES BAND WHO HAVE FOR MANY YEARS BROUGHT JOY AND ENTERTAINMENT FOR ALL WHO LOOKED FORWARD TO WEDNESDAY BAND DAY. THE SOUNDS OF DUKE'S ACCORDIAN MAY CEASE BUT NOT SO HIS MEMORY IN THE HEARTS OF MANY. -watch this column and the Voice for future memorial service.

THE THRIFT STORE will be selling school clothes for extra thrifty prices (\$5 a bag) starting Monday, Aug 12. Come early for best selection.

NOTE TIME CHANGE for Community Action Team's Veterans Officer Russ Clark here at the Learning Center on Second Tuesday each month. Russ will be here from 12:00 noon until 7:00 for the convenience of those getting off work. Call Russ at: 503-366-6580.

SENIOR PICNIC is August 16 at Anderson Park. Bring sides. Plan on joining in on this fun day; Golden Oldies will be there as well.

AARP DRIVER SAFETY offers its best ideas in a new e-book. "Drive Smart-How to Stay Safe and Save Money" Refresh your knowledge of the rules of the road, get money-saving advice on auto insurance, and much more. Available at aarp.org/drivesmart.

ARE YOU CONCERNED about your loved ones being home alone? There are medical alarm systems available that may save their lives or yours as well. Come into the Center for information.

FROM COMMUNITY ACTION TEAM: The mission of the weatherization program is "To reduce energy

costs for low-income families, particularly for elderly, people with disabilities and children, by improving the energy efficiency of their homes while ensuring their health and safety. Call the C.A.T. office for information. 503 397-3511.

LUNCHES served here Monday through Fridays. Wednesdays are band days, and Fridays are game days.

SENIOR SIGN OFF: Save your money, and when you have silver in your hair, you will have gold in your purse.