

Johnson and Witt Hold Town Hall in Vernonia *continued from page 3*

tory budget” that isn’t based on current law, while the legislature wrote a current revenue budget that Johnson termed “stark.” “I’ve been hunting for additional revenue to help fix the systemic problem with our budget,” said Johnson about the current \$1.8 to \$2 billion shortfall in the legislative budget. Johnson also mentioned that she is working on the transportation plan, PERS reform, and trying to find a way to keep health insurance for 350,000 Oregonians.

Johnson discussed in detail the working group for the transportation package she is part of, that is addressing funding for non-highway modes of transportation, transit safety, preserving the transit system infrastructure, traffic congestion, and management accountability. Johnson noted that she is advocating for highway improvements in Portland – improvements to I-205, to state highway 217, and I-5 at the Rose Quarter – designed to address congestion. Johnson addressed a specific question about finding ways to make bicycles pay their share for development and use of infrastructure, and said there is a

growing recognition that everyone has to “have skin in the game.” She said the transportation package may include a point of sale tax on bicycles that would provide revenue for bicycle programs.

Both Witt and Johnson expressed disagreement with the Governor’s declaration making Oregon a Sanctuary State through Executive Action. “This was declared by one branch of the government and I don’t think it is anywhere close to a universally held principle by members of the other branches of the government,” said Witt. The audience and Johnson expressed dismay that federal funding to Oregon could be cut because of the Governor’s actions, including CDBG funding, which the City of Vernonia has used in the past to build the Vernonia Community Learning



consequences and when we cast our vote we need to fully understand at least some of the implications of that.”

“We don’t have a comprehensive immigration policy and as a result of that I think we are not delivering very well and everybody is dissatisfied,” added Johnson. “We’re all over the place because Congress, in my view, has abdicated their responsibility to come up with a comprehensive immigration plan.”

Both Witt and Johnson stated that they opposed proposed changes to the Forest Practices Act, with Witt saying he did not believe the bill would even get out of committee. Both encouraged voters to continue to pressure legislatures other than themselves on the issue. “I’m a hard no on this and I will work like a dog to kill it in the Senate,” added Johnson.

On fisheries, Johnson said that the Governor needs to respect the decisions of citizen boards and commissions that do a lot of the work to create and recommend policy.

Johnson encouraged citizens and voters to visit the Oregon Legislative Information System website (olis.leg.state.or.us) for updates on what is ongoing in Salem and in Oregon government.

Center, helped to upgrade the City sewer system, and to build the new Senior Center/Food Bank. “Rural communities use that process a lot to get money for projects,” said Vernonia City Administrator Josette Mitchell, who was in attendance. “I believe this imperils those funds,” said Johnson.

When asked if they agree with the way the federal government is addressing undocumented immigration at this time, particularly children born in this country, Witt stated, “We had an election in November and the people spoke. We have a President who has a position that is more aggressive than we’ve seen in the past and I think the discussions we’re having reflect that, as do the number of cities and states that have declared that they are not enforcing federal law. Elections do have

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