

Salem Report

By Representative Brad Witt



It's hard to believe that summer is almost over, but perhaps it is with some relief that we move on to fall, especially with our recent struggle with smoke-filled air. I am sure that the thought of a good, drenching rain has never been so eagerly welcomed! I know that our firefighters will echo that sentiment, especially those who have been on assignment in Central Oregon and California. Thank you for your service – lives were saved because of you!

One good thing about summer, however, is that I get to meet many of you as I travel around the District. St. Helens, Clatskanie, Rainier, and Vernonia have each held wonderful community celebrations and parades – such a

lot of work by so many dedicated volunteers. I also met with members of the Skyline community, who likewise, invest a lot of time and effort in bringing people together. Besides having fun with my constituents, it's also an opportunity to listen to your concerns and help you if I can.

Speaking of addressing concerns, we will soon be back in Salem for another round of Legislative Days. We will have three days of hearings as we attempt to set an agenda for the next Session in January 2019. Among these items will be the constant effort to fund education so that we can fulfill the requirements of the "Quality Education Model" (QEM) established exactly two years ago by the Quality Education Commission.

In addition to funding the QEM, we will also be striving to find solutions

to the housing shortage, the shortfalls in both Medicaid and PERS funding, and the continuing efforts to reduce carbon emissions. All of these issues affect the very quality of life in Oregon and our district, and I look forward to working on these issues with you and for you.

Of interest to many of you will be a visit to our District from Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici. She is scheduled to stop in Scappoose on September 22, at the Scappoose Middle School Auditorium/Gym at 2:00 pm. I hope to see you there.

Please know that you can always contact my office if you need to discuss state agencies or policies that are of concern to you. Please be sure to vote on November 6! Let's make sure that District 31 has the best turnout in the State!

National Hunting and Fishing Day: Celebrating Oregon's Sportsmen and Women

By Representative Brad Witt and Representative Sherrie Sprenger
Co-Chairs, Oregon Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus

Saturday, September 22 is our nation's 46th annual National Hunting and Fishing Day (NHFD). As Co-Chairs of the Oregon Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus and as members of the 48-state National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses, we are proud to take time to celebrate the time-honored traditions of hunting and angling. We are also pleased to recognize the historical and ongoing contributions of our state's original conservationists – sportsmen and women.

Oregon's hunters and anglers are the primary source of conservation funding for the Beaver State. Through the purchase of licenses, tags, and stamps, and by paying self-imposed excise taxes on firearms, ammunition, archery equipment, fishing tackle, motorboat fuel, and other equipment, hunters and anglers drive conservation funding in Oregon and the United States, through the American System of Conservation Funding, a "user pays public benefits" System. Last year alone, this System contributed \$25.5 million, while hunting and fishing licenses brought an additional approximate \$50.4 million to fund state conservation efforts through the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. All Oregonians benefit from these funds through improved access to public lands, public shooting ranges, improved soil and water quality, habitat restoration, fish and wildlife research, private and public habitat management, hunter education, boat access area construction, and many other Oregon Fish and Wildlife projects funded through this System.

Hunting and angling are also a significant economic driver for our state. Oregon's sportsmen and women spend over \$929 million per year on their outdoor pursuits, annually supporting nearly 14,800 jobs in the state and contributing approximately \$99 million in state and local taxes.

Hunting produces countless benefits for our state's conservation funding and economy, therefore it is important that Oregon's sportsmen and women invest time and effort to encourage future participation in these time-honored traditions. This effort to increase hunter participation is called recruitment, retention, and reactivation (R3). Over 450 individual R3 programs nationwide have had regional success, including Oregon Fish and Wildlife's mentored youth hunting program. These programs, as well as many others, need your support and it's going to take the involvement of every Oregon hunter and angler, regardless of age, to ensure the future of the outdoor pursuits we celebrate on NHFD. Our hunting and angling heritage should not be taken for granted, and getting the next generation of Oregon's sportsmen and women involved in the outdoors will help ensure the conservation of our abundant natural resources for the future.

More information on National Hunting and Fishing Day is available at www.NHFD.org or on the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation website at www.congressionalsportsmen.org/policies/state-national-hunting-and-fishing-day.



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