



Protestors invoked the spirit of America's Founding Fathers while displaying signs critical of federal spending policies. (All photos by Michelle Binker, *Illinois Valley News*)

JoCo Tax Day Tea Party draws 1,000

Protests occur throughout Oregon and nationwide

By SCOTT JORGENSEN
IVN Staff Writer

More than 1,000 people surrounded the Josephine County Courthouse in Grants Pass on Wednesday, April 15 to conduct a peaceful Tea Party protest about federal spending.

The tax day rally was one of hundreds held nationwide in protest of federal government policies, including bailouts for failing companies and soaring budget deficits.

Protestors carrying signs and U.S. flags lined both sides of Sixth Street for the two-hour event as a steady stream of passing motorists honked their car horns in support.

Richard Burke, Americans for Prosperity (AFP) Oregon Grassroots director, was the first speaker to address the crowd. He said that the event was not about political party affiliation or President Obama.

"It's about Americans worrying about the future of this country," he said. "We're mad because a nation of the people is being taken away from the people. Put simply, we want it back."

Burke told the audience that they could make their voices heard by being trained in basic political skills such as petitioning and testifying before governing committees. He said that AFP is planning a lobbying day at the state capitol in Salem on May 29 to protest the many tax increases being proposed in the current legislative session.

Elected officials need to be reminded that they work for the public, Burke said.

"This country is not theirs. This country is ours," he said. "This Constitution is not theirs. It's ours."

Jack Swift, the coordinator for Josephine County's AFP chapter, said that current economic difficulties are the result of government policies.

"Our government has created this crisis over 40 years," he said. "It's time for the government to stand down."

Swift read a letter from Oregon Rep. Dennis Richardson (R-Central Point) and Rep. Ron Maurer (R-Grants Pass) expressing their support for the rally and its participants.

Protestors held signs with messages such as "Limit government now," "Down with pirate politicians," "Socialism is not the change we need," "Socialism = trickle-up poverty," "Billions for the bank-

ers, debt for the people," and "Next time read the bill."

Also, "Stimulate business, not government," "Re-establish your state sovereignty," "Honor our Constitution," "Real jobs, not govern-

United States from Yugoslavia in 1959 to escape the ravages of communism.

"America lost its way because Americans lost their way, but today, we found our way home," Walter said.



ment jobs," "Don't give America away," "My grandkids are broke," "Millions, billions, trillions, what's next?" and "Cap+trade=broke & poor."

Retired U.S. Navy Lt. Cmdr. Gary Spangler told the crowd that when he enlisted 50 years ago, he took an oath to defend the Constitution against domestic and foreign enemies.

"I never thought I would have to defend against domestic," he said.

Gil Gillingham, one of many Vietnam War veterans present, said that the federal government's \$13 trillion debt averages to \$37,000 per person.

"We've been the silent majority for far too long," Gillingham said. "We must be silent no more."

NewsWithViews.com Editor Paul Walter described how he emigrated to the

"We are a sleeping giant, and we're waking up now."

Walter urged crowd members to become politically active and involved, and to form discussion groups.

"The government works for you. You are not a serf, so don't act like one," he said. "This is your country, folks."

Margaret Goodwin stated that the U.S. Congress has been "gutting our economy."

"Our government exists to serve the people," she said. "We don't exist to serve the government."

Goodwin said that if the nation's founding fathers knew what was happening, they would "rise from their graves and call for another revolution."

"This is certainly a far cry from what our founding fathers intended," she said. "It's our government, let's take it back."

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