

BEST OF EUGENE READERS POLL



BEST LOCAL POLITICIAN

1. Congressman Peter DeFazio
2. Mayor Lucy Vinis
3. Former Mayor Kitty Piercy

KAPOW! CIVICS

PHOTO: TODD COOPER

BEST LOCAL WORLD-CHANGER

1. Congressman Peter DeFazio
2. Mark Frohnmayer *Arcimoto*
3. Kelsey Cascadia Rose Juliana
plaintiff with the Our Children's Trust climate lawsuit

Congressman Peter DeFazio was elected in 1986. He's now "the longest serving House member in Oregon's history," according to his website. He sat down with *Eugene Weekly* to talk about his biggest current challenges and winning Best World-Changer and Best Local Politician. We've gotta say, we love how he shows up to speeches wearing his Smokey Bear "Resist" t-shirt and his don't-take-any-crap-from-anyone attitude that he attributes to his wrestling coach, who was also his dad.

How does it feel to be selected by *Eugene Weekly* readers as a World-Changer and Best Local Politician?

World-changer is a new one to me. That's incredible — I hope I can. I'm trying to keep Trump from starting World War III. I've got a war powers resolution to fix the War Powers Act and require prior authorization before any offensive action by the president. Right now the law would allow him to attack North Korea, then report to Congress later — a little too late. I guess I am trying to change the world. I also happen to believe that climate change is a serious problem, which unfortunately doesn't enjoy a majority support in Washington, D.C. — detached from reality right now. I guess I do deal with world problems.

Local politician, I think I've gotten that award before. I'm honored to get that. I work in a really difficult environment now, and getting a little support at home is really welcome.

Why did you originally decide to run for office?

Oh, that was a long time ago. I worked for the former Congressman Jim Weaver, learned a lot from him and ultimately I was working for him in Washington, hated Washington and wanted to come back to Oregon. I lived in Springfield, and Springfield at that point owned a minuscule part of the Washington public power supply system; they had a proposal to build five nuclear plants. The plants were billions of dollars over budget, indebting my tiny little town. I got involved in that and filed a lawsuit that was ultimately successful. A lot of people were saying to me "You know you should run for office," because I had held some of the first demonstrations ever in the city of Springfield. We surrounded the utility board, burned our bills and a few other things. I then decided to run for county commissioner against the incumbent Republican county commissioner.

What do you think your biggest challenge is going to be in the coming couple of weeks and years?

The thing that's taking most of my time right now is stopping the chairman of the [House] Transportation Committee from privatizing air traffic control in the United States and giving control of it to the airlines, who in my opinion don't run their own airlines very well — let alone taking over our national airspace.

Has the president tried to work at all on coming to the other side of the aisle?

I have not met with the president; I have met with his chief infrastructure guru and, unfortunately, his predilection is to privatize our infrastructure. I'm trying to bring them around to something that might really work, as opposed to something that's ideological and that isn't going to work. They're some radical proposals. — *Corinne Boyer*