

Bipartisan Agenda

Wyden, Smith Will Work Together On Key Issues

(Washington, DC) Oregon's Senators, Democrat Ron Wyden and Republican Gordon Smith, unveiled their bipartisan agenda for recently-started 106th Congress today, stressing a wide range of issues from education to agriculture to transportation. The agenda incorporates suggestions offered by constituents during the pair's unprecedented series of bipartisan town meetings across the state in January and February.

Speaking at the Capitol Hill news conference today, Wyden said, "A lot of things that go on under this big white dome don't seem to matter much to a lot of folks back home. But the items on this agenda represent a pretty good cross section of the

concerns we've heard about from Oregonians. Gordon Smith and I are not here today to embrace one another's political ideology, but to reaffirm our mutual commitment to place Oregon's needs first."

"By traveling around the state and listening to Oregonians, we've been able to develop a serious agenda that includes issues very important to the future of our state," said Smith. "Even when Sen. Wyden and I disagree, our constituents are best served when we come to solutions and solve problems in a way that is constructive, not destructive. And that includes focusing on how we can find agreement, not on every detail of an issue, but on the general direction.

A Bipartisan Agenda for the 106th Congress

EDUCATION

SALMON RECOVERY

ENHANCING OREGON'S WORLD-CLASS TRADE STATUS

MEDICARE

UMATILLA WEAPONS DEPOT CLEAN-UP MITIGATION

TRANSPORTATION

PROTECTING OUR KIDS AND OUR COMMUNITIES

STANDING UP FOR OREGON AGRICULTURE

LOW-COST ENERGY

FOREST HEALTH

Generation-X Legislators To Convene Conference on Youth Involvement

Salem - Young legislators worried about dwindling interest in politics by their peers are organizing a one-day conference scheduled for Friday, April 30, 1999 at the State Capitol and Willamette University. The conference, which begins at 10:00 a.m. and ends around 4:00 p.m., will discuss how to energize youth to take charge of issues that directly affect them.

About 150 youth activists across the state are expected to participate in the conference that has the endorsement of Governor John Kitzhaber. The Governor is expected to welcome the future leaders to the State Capitol. Participants will have the opportunity to meet and discuss with legisla-

tors, lobbyists and the media how to empower young people. "Unless we find ways to get youth involved in the process it will be difficult to sustain our democracy," Representative Deborah Kafoury, a co-host among young legislators behind the conference said. "Young people want to be heard and be recognized for their contribution to this society. We find ways to communicate this clearly to the older generation. I believe that an appreciation of young people's progressive efforts would encourage others to be involved." If you are interested in attending the conference or would like more information, call Jennifer Nelson at (503)986-1418.

Urban Ecosystems Discovery Camp

The Urban League of Portland and PSU's Urban Ecosystems Project will be cosponsoring a two-week Urban Ecosystems Discovery Camp this summer at Harriet Tubman Middle School. Serving students from North/Northeast Portland middle schools and the Urban League, the camp will be held Monday through Friday, June 28 - July 9 (except July), from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

The camp provides a positive and challenging experience with real hands-on activities linked to classroom learning curriculum. The teachers are experienced Portland public school teachers, and the camp is coordinated and supported by Urban Ecosystems and Urban League staff, and faculty from Portland State University.

The registration deadline is June 14, 1999. For free information, call Linda Hill at 725-8309. To receive a Summer Camp brochure and application, call Heidi Nice at 725-3191.

Pick up new Tri-Met bus schedules

Several Tri-Met bus schedules change beginning Sunday, March 28 and new schedule information is now available.

Brochures outlining bus schedule changes, and new schedules for three dozens individual bus routes are now available on vehicles. Free Tri-Met Guide supplements, detailing all schedules that have changes since September 1998, are available at the Tri-Met office in Pioneer Court-

Volunteer Openings

Want to make a difference in how the area's regional government includes citizens? Become a member of the Metro Committee or Citizen Involvement (MCCI).

The committee currently has openings for residents throughout the Metro region of 24 cities and three counties. MCCI members develop and maintain programs and procedures to impact and monitor Metro's citizen's involvement activities. Members aid communication between citizens and Metro's elected officials, and enhance citizen participation in metro decision-making. They also advise departments on implementing Metro's Public Involvement Planning Guide adopted July 1998.

Metro, the regional government that serves 1.3 million people who live in Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties, provides regional services that guide growth and help ensure that livable communities are created for the future.

For more information, contact Karen Withrow, MCCI Administrative Assistant, 797-1539.

house Square, or by calling 238-RIDE.

Most changes are adjustments to make bus schedules more reliable. Schedules will also change for all buses that cross the Hawthorne Bridge. While those schedules change March 28, the bridge opening is delayed until April 25, which will cause some delays until the bridge opens. New schedules are also available for four new bus routes that replace existing service in Sunnyside and Happy Valley.

Home Loan Program Expanded to Serve More Homeowners

PORTLAND, Ore. - March 18, 1999 - Spring is right around the corner, and many Portlanders are considering purchasing a new home or are ready to start repairs, remodeling or even refinancing. For more than 20 years, the Portland Development Commission (PDC) has been making home loans while helping to preserve Portland neighborhoods. Traditionally targeting its programs to low- and moderate-income households, PDC now has the expanded ability to serve any homeowner in the city.

Last year, PDC began offering Fannie Mae Home Style loans to Portland homeowners. The program enables PDC to combine loans for home refinancing or purchase with home repair needs to create one affordable loan. The new program also allows PDC to loan money to homeowners with higher income levels than ever before and in every Portland neighborhood.

"PDC's loan program has

changed to better meet the needs of Portland homeowners," said Barbara Riegler, Neighborhood Housing Preservation manager. "What hasn't changed is our desire to help invest in their most important asset - their home. The Fannie Mae program allows us to make more loans available to people in a wider array of income levels."

Another unique aspect of PDC's loan program is the pairing of each loan recipient with PDC construction specialist, something traditional lenders do not provide. The experienced construction specialists help with all phases of home repair, including identifying the work to be done, reviewing bids, clarifying contracts and monitoring construction. The owner makes final decisions, including payments to contractors. Homeowners benefit from the construction specialists - who know the construction industry and the ins and outs of city codes and permits - at no extra charge.

More than 10,000 home loans have

been provided by PDC over the last 20 years. Portland homeowners can use PDC funds for purchase and renovation; refinance and renovation; basic repairs such as plumbing, wiring, heating and new roof; assistance with accessibility needs; lead paint removal; and accessory dwelling unit financing. PDC also allows greater use of the home's equity by considering the value of the home after the planned repair work is completed.

PDC is the city's agency for urban renewal, housing and economic development. In addition to Fannie Mae, PDC's home loan program receives federal funds through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the city's Bureau of Housing and Community Development.

PDC's Home Loan Hotline operates Monday-Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and can be reached by calling 823-3400.

For more information, contact: Julie Rawls, PDC, 823-3294

State Releases Child Status Report Abuse Victims and Reports Up; Deaths Down

Oregon's annual child welfare report paints a mixed portrait of children in the state's protection system.

While the number of children who died from abuse or neglect in 1998 is down from the previous year, the number of victims is up and the most vulnerable age group continues to be infants.

Kay Toran is the director of the State Office Services to Children and Families, the agency that compiles The Status of Children in Oregon's Child Protection System 1998 report.

"I want the public to recognize that most of our indicators are up," said Toran. "This is an alert that we have much work to do as a community. I have long said that a single agency cannot protect all of Oregon's children and that it takes caring and cooperative communities to decrease child maltreatment."

The report includes information on foster care, adoptions, number of abuse victims, and the circumstances driving child abuse and neglect: parental drug and alcohol abuse; parental unemployment; parental involve-

ment with law enforcement; and domestic violence.

In 1998, SCF confirmed 10,147 victims of abuse. Of those 1,244 or 9.9 percent, were infants, making this the largest group.

"What is alarming is the continuing trend of violence toward very young children," said Toran. "These incidents, coupled with the intensity of family problems, result in more difficult cases that take longer to resolve."

In 1998, SCF received 31,456 reports of child abuse and neglect, a 12.3 percent increase over 1997.

Toran said such an increase is troubling because it means more children are suspected of being abused or chronically neglected by their parents or care providers. On the other hand, she said it shows that more people are reporting abuse to the agency.

"The good news is that more Oregonians, including our mandatory reporters, are being more assertive in making reports to the agency," said Toran. "This places us in a position to intervene."

In 1998, mandatory reporters who are required by law to report made 75 percent of the total suspected child abuse and neglect referrals.

Some other report highlights: In 1998, six children died from abuse; 11 died from neglect. In 1997, 12 died from abuse and 22 from neglect.

Ten years ago, 30 percent of children in foster care were younger than 6. Today that group represents 40 percent of children in foster care.

The number of drug-affected babies dropped for the fourth year in a row and continues a downward trend that began after a peak in 1989.

Staff levels and increasing referrals limit the number of families that SCF can serve. In 1998, 55 percent of the child abuse and neglect reports received a field assessment.

There were 7,461 founded abuse reports in 1998, an increase of 2.7 percent.

Neglect is potentially as lethal as abuse and often requires more services over a longer period of time.

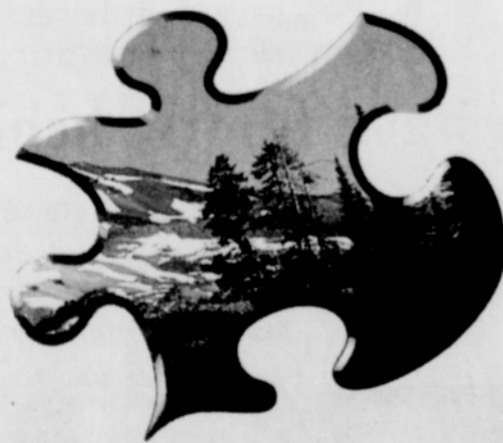


Happy Easter

From
The Portland Observer



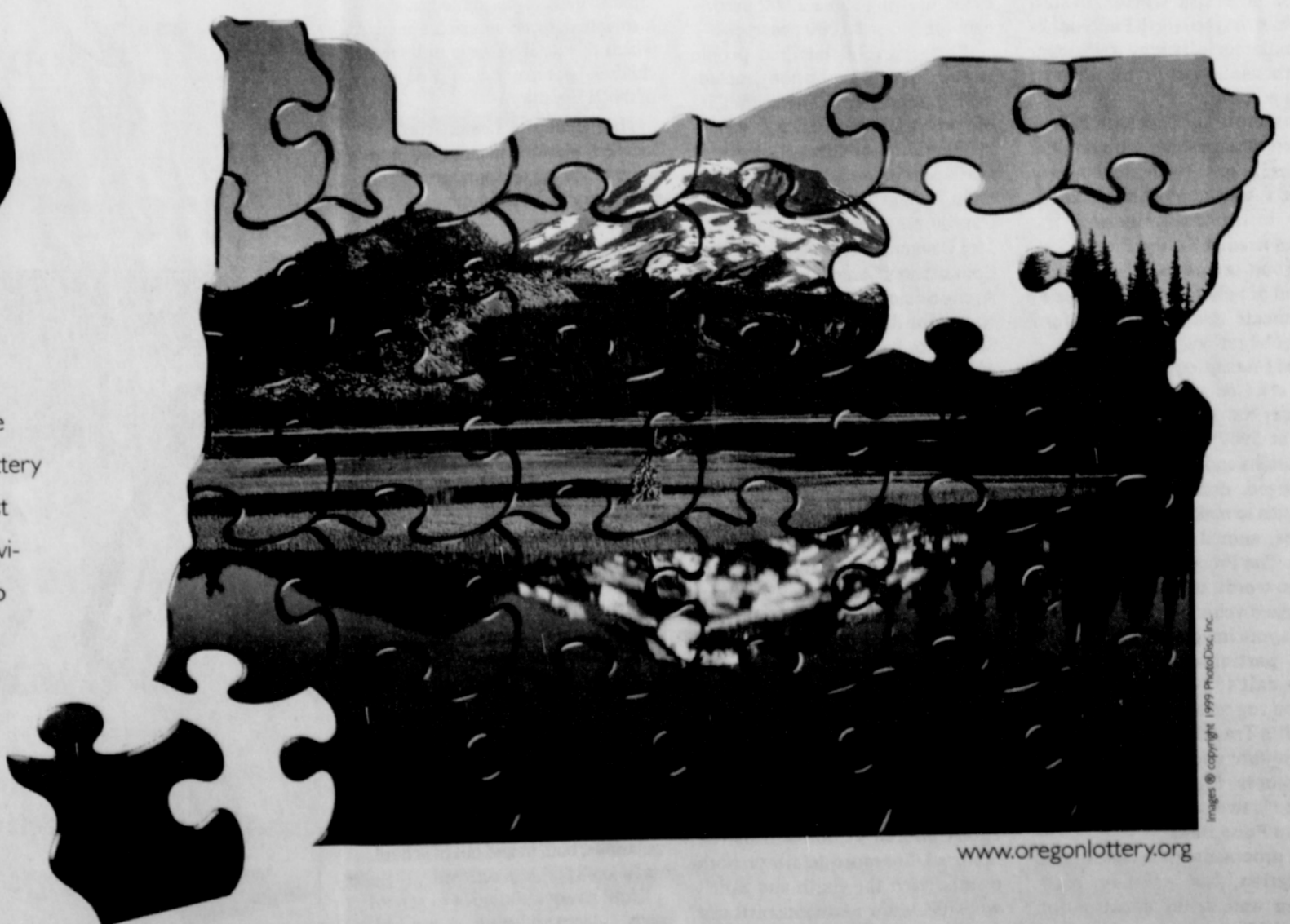
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