

Kitzhaber Focuses on Budget, Economy

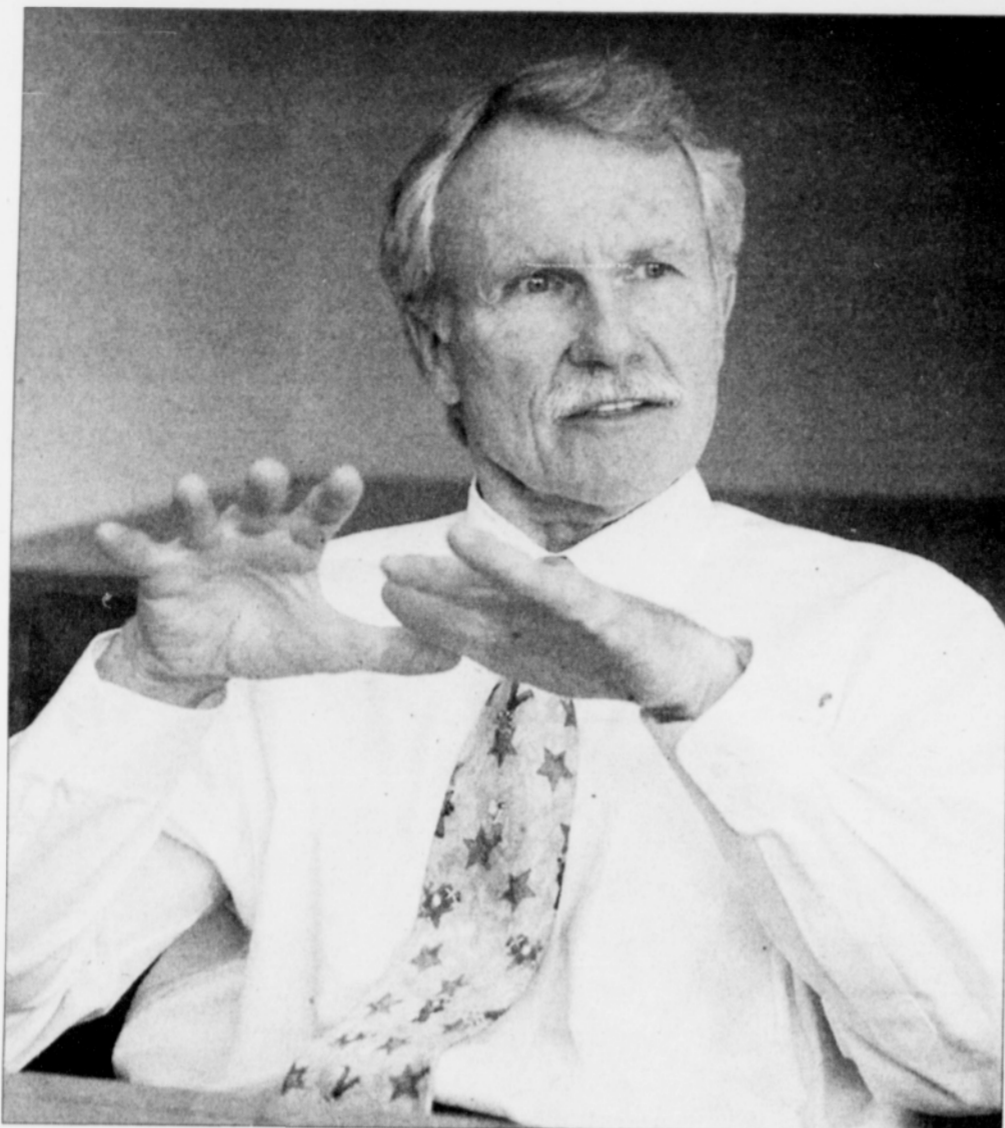
Returns to office as governor for third time

(AP) — After an eight-year hiatus from public life, John Kitzhaber has taken back the helm of a state reeling from joblessness, with a budget deficit that will soon bring steep cuts in services on which residents rely.

Kitzhaber took the oath of office Monday to begin an unprecedented third term as governor of Oregon.

A former emergency room doctor who once called Oregon "ungovernable" as he finished what most people expected to be his final term in office nearly a decade ago, Kitzhaber has laid out lofty goals to transform the way government thinks and operates.

Before he can get there, however, he'll have to tackle a budget with a \$3.5 billion shortfall. And he'll have to do it while



John Kitzhaber is returning to public life to once again lead Oregon as Governor.

working with a Legislature that could be on course for gridlock.

Kitzhaber's inaugural address focused largely on the economy and the state's precarious bud-

get situation.

Oregon spends too much on fixing problems after they've arisen — on prisons, courts, foster care and other services —

and not enough on investments like education that could keep people away from the criminal justice system and state-funded services, Kitzhaber said.

"We have our priorities backward, and the central challenge facing Oregon today is to reverse this trend," Kitzhaber said.

Kitzhaber said he would focus on creating jobs and raising per-capita income above the national average, working not just on job growth in the Portland area but also in rural areas and in minority communities.

"I want, in fact I expect, to be held accountable by the citizens of Oregon for making significant progress toward that goal during my term," he said.

The state House of Representatives will be evenly split between Republicans and Democrats, with 30 members each. With no tie-breaking provision, no piece of legislation can get to Kitzhaber's desk without support from both parties.

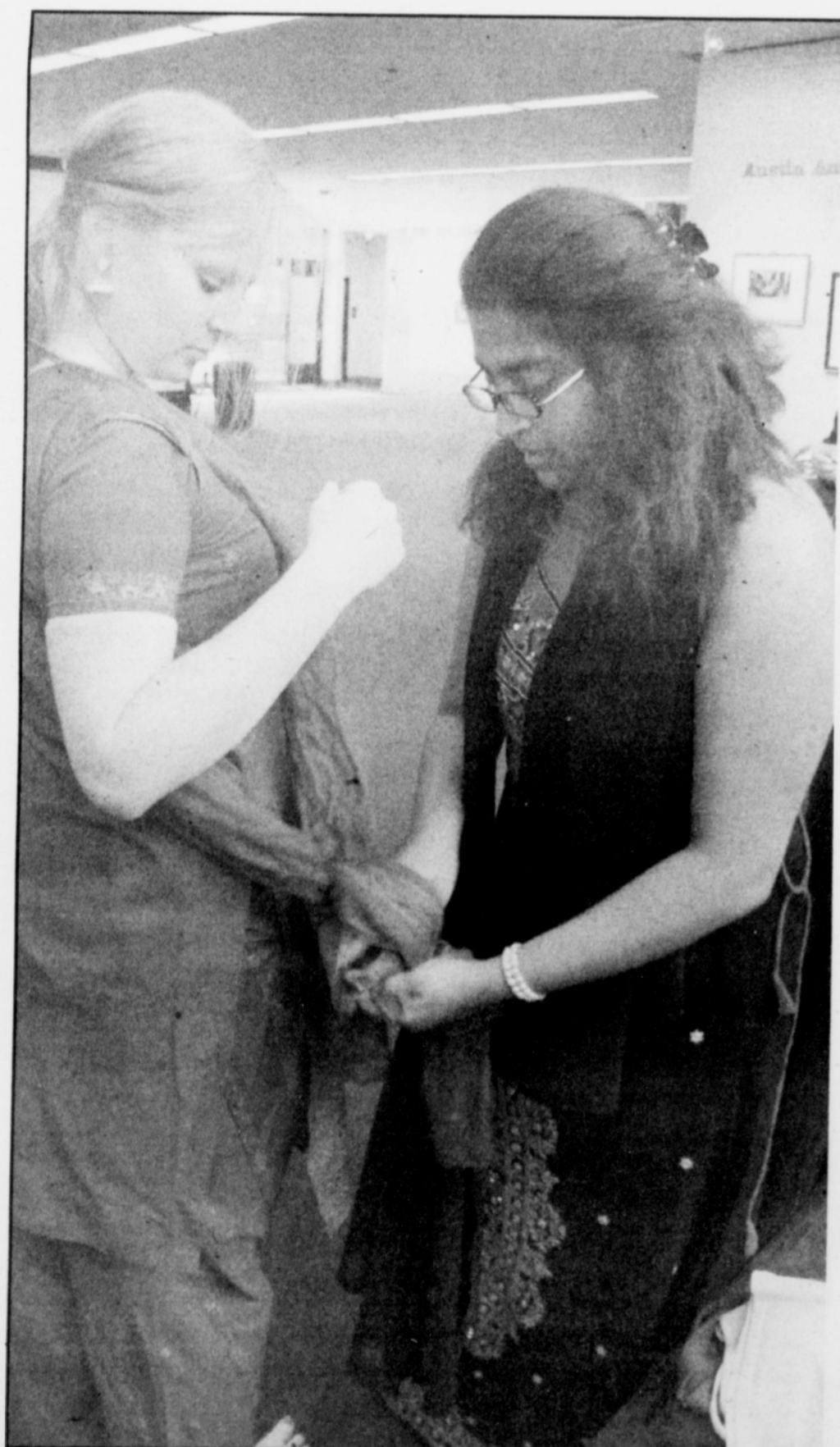
Kitzhaber is continuing dominance of the governor's office by the Democratic Party, which

has held the position since the 1986 election.

Lawmakers in the House have worked out a rough framework for sharing power. There will be co-speakers, one from each party, who will share the duties. But much is left to be decided, and the first test of whether the House will be able to function also comes Monday, when the Legislature will convene for the first time. The House will attempt to organize and approve rules to govern the next six months.

There will also be a milestone in the Senate. Lawmakers are expected to elect Democrat Peter Courtney to a fifth straight term as Senate President. Nobody has ever been Senate president longer than four terms — a record held by several former senators, including Kitzhaber.

Kitzhaber's third gubernatorial election was his closest. He defeated Republican Chris Dudley, a political newcomer and former professional basketball player, with 49 percent of the vote, compared to 48 percent for Dudley.



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School Boundary Changes Proposed

After more than a year of analysis, Portland Public Schools is addressing both low enrollment and overcrowding in some of the K-8 schools that feed into Grant High School.

District officials say the goal is to serve area students better. In particular, the school district is focusing on low enrollment in grades 6-8 at Sabin PK-8 School; low neighborhood enrollment at Beaumont Middle School; overcrowding at Alameda Elementary School; and space concerns at Sabin.

A boundary advisory committee — composed of parents

from each of the affected schools, neighborhood association members and district staff — met in December to help PPS develop a series of options.

The entire community is invited to learn about and comment on the options at a meeting Thursday, Jan. 13 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Beaumont, 4043 N.E. Fremont St.

The school board is scheduled to consider boundary changes during a board session on Monday, Jan. 24. Any changes would take effect in the fall and would not affect current students or their siblings, school officials said.

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