

Salem Scene

By Jack Zimmerman

Gov. Bob Straub's concern for Oregon's future was emphasized by his conference of businessmen, labor leaders and environmentalists in Portland early this month.

Conducted in hopes of drafting legislative proposals to revitalize the state's business climate without damaging the environment, the two-day meeting was somewhat similar to a meeting of the Legislature it was designed to influence.

It opened with an address by the Governor. It was well-scripted in advance. It consisted largely of continuing discussion between forces with differing points of view. And, although consensus was achieved on many issues, results won't be known for months to come.

The parallel between the conference and a legislative session is perhaps more aptly applied to a special, rather than regular, Salem meeting of lawmakers. Regular sessions are much longer.

Officially entitled Governor's Conference—Oregon's Future: Jobs and the Environment, the gathering also had similarities to an earlier meeting of concerned business and labor people (they left out environmentalists), who met, discussed and circulated legislative goals aimed at improving the economy.

A larger-than-anticipated attendance at the Straub conference, coupled with the presence of many participants from the earlier spontaneous gathering, moved more than one observer to dub the Governor's group the Committee of Three Hundred and Fifty.

On the other hand there was a uniqueness to the Straub assemblage that tended to discredit critics who may have come away wondering what had been accomplished. The chief executive set the tone for this one-of-a-kind happening when he urged participants to set aside prejudices and work to achieve what's best for Oregon.

The fact the confab occurred at all was public recognition with underlined gubernatorial emphasis that Oregon and Oregonians can't get by forever without achieving a practical balance between economy and ecology.

Straub made his attitude perfectly clear by jolting his opening day audience with a spur-of-the-moment suggestion the meeting's title should have included profits, as well as jobs and the environment!

Actually, the conference dealt with four major topics: 1. Permits, Paperwork and Legislation; 2. Taxation; 3. Energy and Environmental Considerations, and 4. Attraction of New Industry and Expansion of Labor Force.

So-called white papers on each topic included specific items for discussion and participants in the four separate sub-meetings generally managed, at the insistence of experienced leadership to stick to assigned subjects.

Generally, consensus was achieved on points such as the fact government generates too much paperwork, people don't want more taxes, we need more energy without doing irreparable environmental damage and we should have more jobs for people who want to work.

Specifically, participants recommended expanding efforts to reduce paperwork by coordinating permit processes, limiting bureaucratic overlap and duplication, reviewing agency activities and tying the hands of lawmakers and bureaucrats alike by requiring statements of intent to accompany all new legislative proposals and regulations.

They asked for uniform statewide zoning language, a master permit form and a statute of limitations of declaratory judgements to protect defendants from frivolous lawsuits aimed at delaying developments.

Those discussing taxation had more difficulty achieving consensus and shocked others by recommending elimination of the federal deduction when figuring Oregon income taxes—coupled with a reduction of taxes. They also asked for complete overhaul of present taxes, slashing inheritance taxes, raising pollution control credits and reducing costs for Unemployment and Workmen's Compensation, even though the last two subjects weren't on the agenda.

All things considered, the Straub conference did obtain data for legislative proposals (and welcomes additional ideas by mail until July 11). It brought people of diverse persuasions face to face.

But most important perhaps, it exposed a lot of comparative newcomers to complexities inherent in the process by which a relative handful of Oregonians create laws that regulate us all.

THE GAZETTE-TIMES HEPPNER

Editorial & Viewpoint

Peoples' values differ

It took a pair of special votes, but the city of Heppner finally passed a levy over the six per cent limitation.

On the first try for \$93,866 outside the six per cent, voters profusely balked, 259-93, a margin of more than two to one.

Then the budget committee went to work. They slashed the budget by \$60,000 and sent a levy of \$32,138 back to the voters.

Even though the levy was substantially lower the second time around, council members and budget committee members still were quite concerned that the try would fail.

One of the prime reasons for voter concern seemed to be not on how the rates of their water increased but on how and when they were going to be able to play in that water.

The city's swimming pool opened Tuesday with the possible stipulation that it would be closed July 1 if the levy failed.

More than one swimming enthusiast was flustered by this. They even went as far as to say, not in jest, that they would rather see a pool full of water this summer than an extra policeman or an extra street crewman.

And extra only means necessary addition. It just seems funny the things that people place certain values on these days.

Personal protection from that night dispatcher vs. a swimming pool... If an accident or burglary occurred, it'd sure be difficult to call the Heppner pool for assistance. Let's be thankful for this base necessity levy passed.

W.C.P.

What's a reader want ?

What does a reader want to see in a newspaper? There are as many answers as there are readers to this question, proven by the calls from disappointed or irate readers who didn't hesitate to tell the Gazette-Times when they weren't happy with a certain news story.

One anonymous newspaperman, no doubt after getting a thorough tongue-lashing from an unhappy reader, wrote the following answers to the question.

What does a reader want to see in a newspaper?

—My name.

—A front page story telling how crooked the city and county governments are most of the time.

—My wife's name.

—A feature story telling 25 ways to cheat on federal income tax and 20 ways to cheat on state income tax.

—My kids' names.

—A story about the affair my neighbor is having.

—More news about lawbreakers.

—A classified ad with a three-bedroom house for sale for less than \$4,000 with nothing down.

—Less news about lawbreakers. I was picked up last night.

—An editorial blasting high school teachers for being too liberal with "F's"

—A picture of the bridegroom instead of the bride when he is more handsome than she is pretty.

—A picture of me on the sports page when I bowled a 183.

—A front page picture of my neighbor being hauled out of a bar by his wife.

—A full page spread about this deadbeat across the street from who just had his car repossessed.

—A front page story about greedy merchants, like the one who said I have to pay for my furniture or he'll sue me.

—More letters to the editor naming the crooks we have in town.

—Less pictures showing how cute everybody else's kids are. Mine are better-looking than the ones you have in the paper.

—A complete biographical sketch about the "most important citizen in town." And be sure you spell my name right.

But, seriously, this is your newspaper, written, edited and published for the people of Heppner and Morrow County and the people who want to know what's going on in Morrow County.

If you have an idea for a way or ways in which the newspaper could do a better job for you, write a letter to the editor or drop in. The door is always open.

Communications & Comments

Proud, thankful

EDITOR:

After having served as Deputy State Fire Marshal for North Eastern Oregon, I am transferring to the Willamette Valley.

I would like to take this opportunity to say thanks to all of the people involved in the fire and police services in Morrow, Umatilla, Union and Wallowa Counties for the support they have given me. I have met many wonderful people and made a lot of close friends. I am proud to have been associated with the fire departments in this area, both paid and volunteer. They are doing a great job in a hazardous line of work. Again, thanks.

CLYDE E. CASTO

Deputy Fire Prevention Division
Office of State Fire Marshal

Church thanks paper

EDITOR:

The Ione United Church of Christ would like to thank you for publishing all the articles and giving us such good coverage for our barbecue and auction, June 5. We were also very pleased with the ads you prepared for us.

We had our most successful year ever, a great crowd.

JUDY REA

Rebuttal to report

EDITOR:

I, too would like to add a few lines of rebuttal to Mr. Cutsforth's ecological report on Tennessee, Kentucky and Virginia in April 22, 1976 issue.

In the past ten years my wife and I have spent as much as ten months at a time in our many visits to the areas described by Mr. Cutsforth. Some of our nation's most beautiful and immaculate scenery is comprised of such as Gatlinburg, Tennessee and the Great Smokes, the Blue Ridge Parkway, the Shenandoah Valley and I will include the Cumberland Historical Park area. (My mother came to Oregon from Cumberland Gap in 1893. She was reared in Virginia fifty feet from Hancock County, TN from whence my father came in 1868).

From Cumberland Gap one can visit all three states in two minutes. Interstate 40 the entire breadth of Tennessee is an excellent example of the pride of these people and many beautiful homes are to be seen. No-where were we able to drive 50 miles without seeing a house (those states have been settled much too long for that), much less able to walk that distance on plastic bottles. Homes are privately owned there just as elsewhere and the land is not controlled by huge corporations. Many years ago the giant coal kings "stole" the mineral rights from the landowners for as little as fifteen cents per acre. They did not get the land with the minerals. Company houses were built to induce the miners to live where they would be readily available for work. The companies never kept up these houses and they became the most prodigious example of poverty. I might add that the greatest amount of coal comes from the Cumberland mountains that form the boundary of part of Kentucky and Virginia.

We did not see evidence of processed or bottled drinking water as the natural water did not seem to be "contaminated for drinking purposes." (I question the syntax).

Lastly may I add that the people of Tennessee, Kentucky and Virginia are a proudful people and very proud of their heritage. If an outsider is compatible with them he or she will soon be aware of it. Likewise if the person doesn't fit that will also soon be realized.

I am certainly happy that such people as our past governor and a few others who want to keep outsiders out of Oregon were not living here in Oregon's formative years. Those outsiders were our ancestors and we would not be here today. Anyone from Tennessee, Kentucky and Virginia is certainly welcome in my home.

V. IRVIN RITCHIE
Milwaukie, OR.

About the picture

Two deer graze on open field about two miles west of Heppner. (G-T Photo)

THE GAZETTE-TIMES HEPPNER

The Heppner Gazette-Times

The official newspaper of the City of Heppner and the County of Morrow.

G.M. Reed, Publisher
Dolores Reed, Co-publisher

Published every Thursday and entered as a second-class matter at the post office at Heppner, Oregon, under the act of March 3, 1879. Second-class postage paid at Heppner, Oregon.