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faced accusations in recent months that she used her position as first lady to influence the governor's administration and advance her private consulting business.

Kitzhaber maintains, however, he has done nothing wrong.

In a statement, Kitzhaber recounted some of his accomplishments as governor, to which he was recently elected for a fourth term. He also mentioned the state is "poised to reach agreements" to expand irrigated agriculture in the Umatilla

Basin.

In his budget to be approved by lawmakers this year, Kitzhaber proposed a \$51.6 million water development fund that would establish infrastructure to provide more water for local farmers from the Columbia River.

Port of Umatilla General Manager Kim Puzey said he hopes the new governor "will be able to pick up the ball" and move that project forward.

"We're anxious to work with the new governor, Kate Brown, on the former governor's water infrastructure package that the region has been working with him on in the past few months and

hope that she can follow through with that, demonstrating that she cares about all Oregonians," he said. "We have some very important issues in the region, and I hope that she has a staff that can get her up to speed quickly so this is a seamless transition. I look forward to a bright future with Gov. Brown."

Umatilla City Manager Bob Ward said he is particularly concerned about Kitzhaber's water proposal.

"The only issue that comes to my mind at this point are those things that I think we have been somewhat counting on

in regards to Kitzhaber's policies that may be somewhat up in the air right now, most particularly state government-required changes that would allow us to make our Columbia River water available for agricultural purposes," he said.

Ward said Kitzhaber's recent ethics scandal has become "a distraction and a diversion" that could have hampered the water proposal's progress if he stayed in office.

"If the resignation is necessary to keep things moving forward, then it's better to have that come sooner than later," he said.

Hermiston Mayor Dave

Drotzmann said he believed Kitzhaber made the right decision to resign, given his lack of support from his political party and other state leaders, but was also concerned about the fate of expanding the region's water, as well.

"I'm concerned because the governor has finally been open to the conversation for more water to the area," he said. "I'm very concerned how that's going to impact the region. Having to have those conversations with a new governor, or a new interim governor, we'll have to start back at square one with that."

Drotzmann said he has

met Brown on several occasions and believes she is a great person.

"I had some great conversations (with Brown)," he said. "She's actually been out here to Hermiston, so she knows where it's at. That's a good start. ... I look forward to working with her in the future and continuing to address the positive things we've got moving forward in our community."

According to the Oregon Constitution, the secretary of state temporarily takes over after a governor's death or resignation; the position will be placed on the ballot in the next general election in 2016.

EDUCATION:

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Brown decides to do next week, there could potentially be an impact to public education," she said. "Right now, it is yet to be seen."

Hermiston Deputy Superintendent Wade Smith said even though Kitzhaber served in the official capacity as the state superintendent of public instruction, he is optimistic that Deputy Superintendent Rob Saxton and Chief Education Officer Nancy Golden will successfully take the helm for education.

"Thankfully, he has hired an outstanding deputy superintendent, and we have an outstanding chief education officer," he said. "Obviously, with any change in leadership like this one, there will be fits and starts and challenges in coordination with communication, but I am glad we have two outstanding educational leaders to steward all our educational endeavors and moving those forward."

Smith said he and Superintendent Fred Maiocco are

concerned, from a policy and a financial standpoint, about what is going to happen with the more than 400 bills that have been submitted that will impact education and its funding.

"The governor's policy for education has been strong," he said. "Attitude in how that will affect the movement of bills that seem to support education forward, and maybe, on the contrary, the opposing of bills, is what we will have to wait on."

Smith said he isn't too concerned about the state education budget because the \$6.9 billion the governor proposed fell far short of what is needed to sustain even current programming for education.

Area superintendents say at least \$7.5 billion is needed to sustain current programming and things like salary step increases, inflation, Public Employees Retirement System contributions and health insurance costs.

"The governor's budget was woefully short of what was needed to support even the status quo," Smith said.

"I'm less concerned about the budget because it was so far south of adequacy that I don't think his departure is going to impact the financial realm."

Echo Superintendent

Raymon Smith said the timing of Kitzhaber's resignation concerns him most.

"It is poor timing in the middle of the development of a budget system, not only for education, but for

all entities," he said. "My concern is the focus is on (Kitzhaber) and how they are going to adjust to having a new governor. The focus of our leaders right now, in the state, is not

focused on building our budget. The timing of it couldn't be any worse, in my mind, because of where we are all at with us trying to develop our budgets for the next biennium."

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