



Oregon State Archives

800 Summer Street NE

Salem, OR 97310

503-373-0701 ext. 1

sos.oregon.gov/archives

GOVERNOR NEIL GOLDSCHMIDT ADMINISTRATION

January 12, 1987 to January 14, 1991

Legislative Message, 1989

Source: Legislative Address Governor Neil Goldschmidt, Oregon, 1989

Madame Speaker, Mr. President, members of the Judiciary, distinguished elected officials, ladies and gentlemen of the 65th Legislative Assembly, my fellow Oregonians:

When I took the oath of office in 1987, I spoke of my high regard for the ninety men and women of the Legislature. I asked them to join me to create more work, more choice, more opportunity and more hope for Oregonians.

One way of measuring the progress we have made toward that goal is through statistics. For example:

THE 1988 average unemployment rate for Oregon will be around 5.9 percent, the lowest in nineteen years.

The annual job growth rate is expected to be the highest in four years, and should rank Oregon among the top ten states.

And 1988 saw the highest number of jobs created in nearly a decade.

These are the kind of numbers that make politicians feel good – and make everyone else fall asleep. For they do not measure what we truly value in our lives – faith ... compassion ... courage.

They do not measure the desire of Oregonians to pursue our tenets and hopes to their fullest potential.

Numbers do not reveal how hard the Dominguez family worked to create their food manufacturing company in Hood River. They followed the crops to Oregon in 1957 with fourteen children, and old station wagon and \$20 in their pockets. After years of scrimping and saving, they opened a tortilla factory. And with the help of a community development block grant, Dominguez Family Enterprises now employs 35, and is among the top three tortilla producing companies in the Northwest. And just last week, the State Economic Development Department approved a new Business Development fund loan for further expansion for more jobs.

Statistics ignore the resolve and tenacity of Judy Wallace of Madras. Judy was a teenage mother with little hope of finishing school. But, she enrolled in a teen parent program supported with Student Retention Initiative funds. Judy not only graduated with her classmates, she is now working living on her own, caring for her child, and attending college.

Statistics cannot describe the courage of Earl Johnson, a former Portland Police officer, shot and blinded in the line of duty. He now works for the Employment Division in a job made possible by legislation requiring state agencies to set goals for hiring the disabled.

What defines us and makes us proud are acts of love, creativity and commitment by people empowered to do and be their best – to grow ... to participate ... to contribute to our shared life.

IN the name of the people, you have directed our state government to reach out with a helping hand – and the state is better for it.

And so I am proud to say to the returning members of the Legislative Assembly: You proved that the inhabitants of this building can work together in a spirit of compromise and consensus. By doing so, you helped build public trust in government.

To the new members, I congratulate you on the success of your hard-fought campaigns. For your efforts, the people have rewarded you with the proudest title a free society has to offer, that of citizen representative.

And now, though by voice and vote, through public struggle and passionate debate, you will determine in large measure how your fellow Oregonians will live their lives into the next century.

For it is our privilege and our challenge to serve America in Oregon at a time of vast economic and social change.

This is the change: the world's most advanced microcomputer board, and Douglas Fir board, cut to Japanese specifications. One places Oregon at the forefront of the information explosion; the other adds value to a raw material for export to world markets.

Both were produced by skilled, educated men and women capable of creating ideas that create economic independence.

These products remind us that the essential issue facing you is not the fate of this Governor's budget, nor that of a spending limitation we place upon ourselves a decade ago. The essential issue is whether, in the face of change Oregon can deliver the promise of opportunity and economic independence to all of citizens.

I believe we cannot face the change without facing up to past neglect.

Years of recession – of investment postponed and maintenance delayed – separate us from 1979, a time when growth seemed inevitable.

These are different times, with different needs.

Basic institutions that we inherited, and that are placed in our trust, are breaking down.

And now it falls upon us to fix them, or run the rest of losing our identity and our vision of Oregon as a place where things work.

If anyone doubts it, let them visit Dammasch State Hospital. And they will find a roof that leaks, floors that are falling apart, outside walls that are crumbling, and the hot water system that needs replacement. They will find inadequate sprinkler systems and dietary facilities that do not meet our Health Division standards.

If anyone doubts that our system of financing public education is unfair, let them visit Redmond, a community that has chosen to tax itself above the state average, but still finds its children in overcrowded classrooms, using outdated textbooks, with no winter and spring sports in junior and using outdated textbooks, with no winter and spring sports in junior and senior high, and no busing in a district that measures 500 square miles.

If anyone doubts that our prisons are at the bursting point, let them visit the night shift at the State Correctional Institution, where 11 guards are expected to supervise over 1,000 inmates in a facility designed to hold 476. Let them visit the Release Center in Turner, where inmates with seven to eighteen

months left to serve go through a continuous revolving door of six days locked up and eight days on the streets.

If anyone doubts that conditions in our State Parks are unacceptable, let them visit the last campgrounds build on the coast eighteen years ago at Nehalem Bay and South Beach near Newport – if they can get a reservation.

And if anyone doubts that our fisheries are impaired, let them visit the Oak Springs Hatchery on the Deschutes River, the major producer of cacheable trout for Eastern Oregon.

Or the Cedar Creek Hatchery on the coast, which produces salmon and steelhead. Fish rearing ponds are falling apart and new plumbing is needed to circulate water into the ponds. Most of our state fish hatcheries are well over fifty years old, and we have deferred maintenance on them for over ten years.

My friends, perhaps it is time for you and me to ask the question, who are we?

Are we a people who will continue to live off our inheritance until we have nothing left for our children?

Will we deceive ourselves into believing the future will take care of itself?

Or will we learn this truth: That Oregon is no stronger than its ability to provide justice that protects us, education that sustains us, and work that regards us?

That is the commitment and spirit required in Oregon today.

Now – when the economy is on the rebound and help wanted signs are back...

Now – when we are able to pay some past due bills without a tax increase...

Now is the time to act – boldly and forcefully – and reclaim our vision of an independent and prosperous Oregon.

Imagine an Oregon where we debate educational excellence, not school finance.

Imagine an Oregon where criminals know that breaking the law means swift and certain punishment.

Imagine an Oregon that makes room at the table for all of its citizens in our feast of opportunity, self-respect, and racial harmony – that means no room at the table for skinheads, crips, or bloods.

I do not profess to have all the answers for getting from here to there. Whenever I think I do I remember these words on a sign outside a Benton County auditorium; “Goldschmidt Wednesday – Flea Market Saturday.”

But this much I do know: Our program is the people of Oregon. Our purpose is to enable each to be better and to do better than they might elsewhere:

To get crime off the streets and criminals out of the community, I propose a prison construction program that will add almost 1,100 secure beds...

To bring us another step closer to fairness and stability in public education, I propose a finance package that includes referral to the voters of a Constitutional Amendment that would provide updated tax bases for all school districts...

I propose to take major step to end the neglect and deterioration of our state institutions that care for the mentally ill and mentally retarded...

And I propose to take major steps to end the neglect and deterioration of our state institutions that care for the mentally ill and mentally retarded...

And I propose to restore Oregon's tradition of aggressive managing and protection its natural resources.

Their budget squeezes every tax dollar. To fund the things that need to be done – and to leverage more resources – we started by cutting \$60 million out of existing programs and eliminating sixteen hundred positions. And let me repeat: This budget calls for no general fund tax increase.

My recommendations are not chiseled in stone; I know you will improve upon them. But in you deliberations, in conference rooms and committee chambers, all of us need to ask the same question; By our actions, do we help Oregonians grow, and participate, and contribute?

They taught us well what is on their minds – heard it last fall on their doorsteps. They worry about crime in their streets and drugs in their schools. They want quality, affordable education for their children. They do care deeply about our children's future.

They see too many young people drifting through their days, unable to learn, their potential lost forever to the larger community in which we all live.

We cannot afford to lose them.

For the sake of economic survival – for the sake of our claim to Judeo-Christian values – we must keep this promise to ourselves: No more lost children...no more wasted lives.

Other states, wealthier than ours, have tried to buy their way out of the problem. They have failed.

Government cannot buy commitment.

It cannot buy sacrifice.

It cannot buy family.

We can and we must choose a different trail in Oregon, a trail that leads from the community to the capitol instead of the other way around. In many respects, we are still feeling our way.

This is the way I see it: If the children's Agenda is seen as a state government program, it will fail.

If it is seen as a way of helping communities to help families, I believe we can raise the chances that every child will arrive at school willing and able to learn, with reason to look forward to a better future.

It is ours to know that the trail is blazed for us by heroes in our midst – would that we look, listen and learn.

IN the last ten years, Bill and Louise Calder of West Linn have been foster parents for two hundred children. They now have three drug addicted children living with them – the oldest is two years old – babies who inherited their mothers' drug addiction in the womb.

Caring for them is hard, demanding work. The symptoms of infant drug addiction are tremors, fever, restlessness, high-pitched, inconsolable crying. Without proper care, they are at risk of physical and personality problems throughout their lives.

The Calder's are empowered by the state through monthly medical foster care payments, and special training from the Oregon Health Sciences University.

But more importantly, they are empowered by their community; A mother and her daughter offer special one-on-one care for the babies. The local Lions Club raises money for the children, and club members have purchased car seats, strollers, and beds. And the Calder's housekeeper gives special discount rates.

That is the Children's Agenda.

And so are:

Senator Dukes, and her late husband, Eric, who asked for and adopted a special needs child through the Children's Services Division...

And Preventative School, who helped raise \$18,000 for the Children's Trust Fund/

It is from numberless acts such as these that a Children's Agenda will be built – not by government alone, but by men and women in the community, reaching out and taking responsibility for a child.

And now the time has come for Oregon's leaders to face up to our responsibility – to the child and to every Oregonian.

Oliver Wendell Holmes once said: "As life is action and passion, it is required of men and women that they should share the passion and action of their time, at peril of being judged not to have lived."

Let it be said of the men and women of the 65th legislative Assembly that they not only lived, but left behind more hope that they found, more opportunity than they inherited.