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NEWS RELEASE

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Speaker Rayfield tours state-funded homeless navigation center in Bend with local elected leaders

Rep. Jason Kropf and Rep.-elect Emerson Levy joined the Speaker on the visit, plus a roundtable with local victims' advocates and a meeting with local Redmond leaders

BEND – On the second leg of his three-day trip through Central and Eastern Oregon, House Speaker Dan Rayfield (D-Corvallis) toured a new low-barrier homeless shelter in Bend today, one of the numerous facilities the Legislature funded across the state in recent years.

Speaker Rayfield, Rep. Jason Kropf (D-Bend) and Rep.-elect Emerson Levy (D-Bend) traveled to the new Lighthouse Navigation Center in Bend to tour the new facility. In 2021, Rep. Kropf allocated his district's share of funds (\$2 million) from the American Rescue Project Act (ARPA) to the City of Bend so they could purchase the site for the navigation center. The Legislature also allocated \$2.5 million to help convert the property into a navigation center to support Oregonians experiencing homelessness and providing food and shelter to those in need in Bend.

“I was incredibly impressed with the work local organizations have done to make this center a key community resource in Central Oregon,” Speaker Rayfield said. “It is critical that we keep seeing the impact of these investments in our communities and make them work all over the state. In 2023, we’ll keep making progress to ensure that Oregonians are seeing the results of what we’ve been paying for.”

“I appreciate the support the Speaker has shown for funding local community efforts to help tackle homeless and build more affordable housing that can support our growing workforce,” Rep. Kropf said. “We worked well together in my first term to get our housing and homelessness priorities across the finish line. We’re committed to continue partnering with local providers and communities to tackle these issues once again in the coming session.”

In 2021, Rep. Kropf also chief sponsored [House Bill 4123](#) to help local communities develop a coordinated response to homelessness. The bill allocated \$1 million grants to local governments

and nonprofits – Benton County, Coos County, Deschutes County, Lincoln County, the Mid-Columbia Community Action Council, Polk County, Tillamook County and Umatilla County – as part of the coordinated effort.

“I can’t wait to get to work on coordinated solutions that support building more workforce housing in Central Oregon,” Rep.-elect Levy said. “Dramatically rising housing costs are hurting workers and employers throughout the region. We’ll be working to ensure the people in our communities can afford to live where they work.”

The group started the morning at Redmond City Hall with Mayor-elect Ed Fitch, City Councilor Cat Zwicker, City Councilor-elect John Nielsen and City Manager Keith Witcosky to discuss local economic development priorities related to the Redmond Wetlands Complex, a public safety facility, a city-led affordable housing project and local transportation improvements.

The morning concluded with a local victims’ advocacy roundtable at Bend City Hall to hear directly from victim services providers about their work and their requests for potential state support. Rep. Kropf will be leading on legislation related to victim services and community safety this session in his role as House Judiciary Committee chair.

“In my work as a prosecutor and a victims’ rights attorney, I have seen far too many examples of crimes like domestic violence leading to the victim losing their housing,” City of Bend Mayor-elect Melanie Kebler said. “Investing in both victim services and housing is key to helping crime victims get back on their feet and promote community safety, and I truly appreciate the spotlight legislative leaders have put on these two issues in recent years.”

Photos from the day are attached.

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