



State Representative Greg Smith

House District 57

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Blue Mt. Community College Honors Rep Smith

(Salem) "I am humbled and honored to be recognized by such a great institution," said State Representative Greg Smith (R-Heppner). On Wednesday, February 1st, Smith will receive a special award from [Blue Mountain Community College's Board of Directors](#). He will get the award for his support of community colleges during the [Board's monthly meeting](#) at the college's [Hermiston Center](#), 980 SE Columbia Drive.

"Representative Smith has been a strong supporter of community colleges because he understands their key role in workforce training and economic development. The citizens of northeastern Oregon are fortunate to have enlightened leaders like Greg Smith representing them in Salem," noted John Turner, College President.

"I am proud of the work Blue Mountain has done in recent years to expand programs and add branch campuses to accommodate the population in our rural setting," noted Smith. The 40 year old college serves approximately 6,000 full and part time students at facilities in Pendleton, Milton-Freewater, Hermiston, Boardman and Baker City. The college also has specialized programs for adult basic education and distance learning courses.

"As a small business developer, I know community colleges like Blue Mountain, play a key role in helping Oregon's economy get back on track and helping employers meet the changing needs of their industries," explained Smith.

During the 2005 Legislative Session, Smith was Chairman of the House budget committee overseeing economic development programs and is currently the Vice-Chairman of the House Interim Committee on Economic Development.

State support for Oregon's 17 community colleges [went up \\$40 million](#) over the budget recommended by the Governor, a 10-percent increase. The legislature also made a significant investment in financial aid for full and part time students, setting aside \$78 million for Opportunity Grants.

Smith is excited about new legislative initiatives which he believes will, "ease the transition for high school students wishing to continue into higher education." High school juniors and seniors will now be able to [take certain college courses for free](#) and there will soon be a new system for transferring credits from community colleges to universities.

"Blue Mountain is a not just a great place for young people to get a degree, but it also has a lot to offer older students looking for a change in career. You're never too old to learn new things," said Smith who is now working on a master's degree in business.

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