



The Honorable Greg Smith
Oregon House of Representatives
District 57

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Education, Economic Development and Public Safety Lead List of Discussion Topics from Milton Freewater Visit

MILTON-FREEWATER - Education, economic development and public safety lead the list of discussion topics [Representative Greg Smith \(R-Heppner\)](#) shared during his visit in Milton-Freewater. The day-long visit included meetings with the Rotary Club, city officials, school district representatives and the Chamber of Commerce. With the 2013 Oregon Legislature beginning its formal work on Monday, Representative Smith visited Milton-Freewater to make sure he knew where the community stands on upcoming issues.

“It is important for the voices of Milton-Freewater residents to be heard at the Legislature,” Smith said. “Their input is important as we begin the upcoming session. There are big, statewide issues we will be tackling, but just as important are the issues specific to our region.”

At the Milton-Freewater Rotary Club, Rep. Smith provided an overview of the key issues facing the 2013 Legislature. Those include PERS reform, Governor Kitzhaber’s proposed public safety reforms, and the Columbia River Bridge Crossing. Smith explained that the Columbia River Crossing, which is the replacement for the current I-5 bridge over the Columbia River, is important for efficient shipping of Eastern Oregon commodities. He is also looking into immediate economic benefits from hosting staging areas for bridge construction in Eastern Oregon.

“Our state is interconnected, and this is a prime example,” Smith said. “I’ll be sure Eastern Oregon’s interests are represented at the table when this topic is addressed.”

Rep. Smith also visited with city officials, including Mayor Lewis Key and City Manager Linda Hall, along with members of the city council. He was particularly interested in progress related to the local levy and bridge repairs. Rep. Smith was instrumental in helping bring \$3 million to the project.

“The bottom line for residents is that these repairs will save both businesses and individuals thousands each year on insurance costs,” Smith said. “That’s a good investment for Milton-Freewater.”

At the school district, Rep. Smith visited with Superintendent Jim Reger. The top concern was school funding, including the need to pass an education budget earlier in the session to provide districts with more

certainty.

“One of the biggest single items in the budget is K-12 funding. It is a driver for the rest of our budget process,” Rep. Smith said. “We need to give local districts as much time as possible to plan their own budgets by passing the K-12 budget early. We can’t let it become a political football.”

Rep. Greg Smith is serving his seventh term as a member of the Oregon House of Representatives. As the State Representative for House District 57, Smith represents Umatilla, Morrow, Gilliam, Sherman and portions of Wasco Counties. Milton-Freewater is the second largest city within House District 57.

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