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## *State Representative Greg Smith*

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*House District 57*

*Serving Union, Wallowa, Umatilla,  
& Morrow Counties*

*News Release:*

*March 12, 2007*

### ***Oregon's Rugged Country Promoted by Rep Smith***

(Salem) "This will be a great way to increase tourism and economic development in Eastern Oregon," said [State Representative Greg Smith](#) (R-Heppner) after introducing [House Resolution 2](#) for consideration during the current legislative session. The Resolution designates the territories East of the Cascade Mountains "from the Columbia River plateau to the highlands of the Blue Mountains" as Oregon's Rugged Country.

[Gilliam](#), [Grant](#), [Morrow](#), [Sherman](#), [Umatilla](#), and [Wheeler](#) counties are part of this new designation along with the [Maupin area](#) of Wasco County. "Knowing the huge positive impact tourism has on local economies, the [Pendleton Chamber of Commerce](#) is very excited about the possibilities this new partnership can bring to this part of Oregon," noted Leslie Carnes, the Pendleton Chamber's Executive Director. "We're pleased that so many communities are willing to share this intriguing region with people who aren't lucky enough to actually live here!"

In addition to the Pendleton Chamber, the [Boardman Chamber of Commerce](#), the [Hermiston Chamber of Commerce](#), the [Heppner Chamber of Commerce](#), and the [Wildhorse Resort and Casino](#) are also heavily involved. [Prison Blues](#), a program run by the Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution also makes special denim bags filled with visitor information to promote Oregon's Rugged Country. **HR 2** is simple and to the point:

*"Whereas Oregon's Rugged Country is experiencing a rebirth as a unique destination, offering a safe and welcoming place that encourages a relationship with its country and people; and*

*Whereas Oregon's Rugged Country will continue to attract settlers and tourists who have the courage to explore Oregon's vast and challenging forgotten frontier:"*

A group of civic activists organized a campaign last year to promote this area as Oregon's Rugged Country. A web site was created for this effort: <http://www.areyoutoughenough.org/> Receiving special recognition from the Oregon Legislature will help add momentum. The marketing strategy uses the slogan, "it's three hours and a lifestyle away." Representative Smith explained, "this is a part of Oregon that remains undiscovered to most Oregonians. We want them to come and experience the beauty and adventure we call home. There is so much to see and do from cowboys and community barbeques to hunting and Native American pow-wows."

Smith pointed out, "other parts of Oregon have their own identities such as the Emerald Valley in the Eugene area and the Rogue Valley in the Medford area. It's high time we give our region its own sort of nick name." Smith, who specializes in small business consulting, sees this kind of state endorsement as a big asset for economic development in the area.

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