



## *State Representative Greg Smith*

*House District 57*

*Serving Union, Wallowa, Umatilla &  
Morrow Counties*

*News Release:*

*November 23, 2005*

### **Rep Smith Hosts Operation Outreach to Help Returning Soldiers**

(Salem) "Hundreds of Oregon families are thankful to have their loved ones home for Thanksgiving this year, but they may still need help adjusting to civilian life. That's why I organized a special event to give returning soldiers some much needed assistance," said State Representative Greg Smith (R-Heppner). **The event, the first of its kind in the state, is called Operation Outreach, and people from all over Eastern Oregon are encouraged to attend. It's scheduled for Saturday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Milton-Freewater Armory from 9 am to noon.**

"These men and women of the armed forces put their lives on the line to defend our country and our freedoms, the least we can do is help them make the transition back into the community," noted Smith. **Operation Outreach will bring together more than a dozen state agencies offering assistance in a variety of areas including employment, education, housing and emergency assistance.**

400 Army National Guard soldiers from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion based in LaGrande recently returned home from Iraq along with many troops from other branches of the military. Smith pointed out, "40% of national guard soldiers return without a job to come home to and they aren't often aware of the benefits offered by the state or just don't want to deal with the bureaucracy. **This event gives them the opportunity to talk with agency representatives one-on-one to get the services they need.**"

This year the Oregon Legislature adopted the most sweeping reforms for veterans in decades totaling \$5.4 million. Education, housing, and emergency assistance programs were all enhanced. **Active duty and reserves now get greater benefits to help with college tuition, increased property tax exemptions, and grants to cover daily living expenses.** This new legislation will be explained by the participants at Operation Outreach on December 3<sup>rd</sup>. Similar events are also planned in the beginning of 2006.

The agencies listed below will be at Operation Outreach to provide returning guard and reservists, veterans and their families with information on taxes, drivers' licenses, voter registration, medical care, hunting and fishing licenses, and many other services. The [Oregon Student Assistance Commission](#) will also hold a workshop on tuition benefits.

<a href="#">Oregon Military Department</a>	<a href="#">Oregon Dept of Veterans' Affairs</a>
<a href="#">Blue Mountain Community College</a>	<a href="#">Eastern Oregon University</a>
<a href="#">Oregon Employment Department</a>	<a href="#">Oregon Dept of Revenue</a>
<a href="#">Oregon Housing &amp; Community Services</a>	<a href="#">Oregon Dept of Human Services</a>
<a href="#">Oregon Dept of Consumer/Business Services</a>	<a href="#">Oregon Dept of Fish &amp; Wildlife</a>
<a href="#">Oregon Secretary of State's Office</a>	<a href="#">Oregon Dept of Motor Vehicles</a>

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