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[Home](#)

[About SAO](#)

[News](#)

[Events and Programs](#)

[Membership](#)

[Sponsorship](#)

[Chapters](#)

[Oregon Training Network](#)

[Techstart Education Foundation](#)

[Resource Center](#)

SAO CONNECTION BENEFITS FAIR

October 4, 2007
SAO unveils our
new member services
at our fall networking event!

2007 Oregon Business Plan and Leadership Summit

By Linda Barney, Barney and Associates

Over 1,000 business representatives, government officials, and educators attended the fifth annual Oregon Leadership Summit held January 4 at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland. The emphasis for this conference was on how Oregon can build a sustainable economic environment with direct focus on health care, education/workforce and transportation.

The emcee for the day was Allen Alley, founder and former chairman of the digital display company Pixelworks, Inc. During the summit, Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski announced that Alley would be his new deputy for technology, energy, transportation and economic development – a job the governor said would "help strengthen the bridge between the public and private sectors."

Overview of health care in the US

Oregon Senator Ron Wyden and US Secretary of Health and Human Services Mike Leavitt were guest speakers at the opening Regional Business Plan Session. In his speech, Leavitt described how the cost of health care in the US has escalated. When he was born in 1951, the cost was 4% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) while today it is 16% of the GDP. Leavitt stated, "Clearly this rate of increase cannot be sustained." Leavitt believes the four cornerstones of the health care system are:

1. Connectivity via an electronic health or interoperability record
2. Verified quality standards based on independent assessment
3. Visible pricing to allow for competitive shopping
4. A set of incentives to promote healthy behaviors in consumers and low-cost quality care for providers and payers

A number of Oregon groups agreed to "sign on" to pledge to make this happen. Oregon has been a leader on a variety of health care issues in the past and Leavitt hopes that Oregon will step out and lead on his health care initiative. For more information, see this article [Employers Sign Pledge for Value-Driven Health Care](#).

Changes needed in health care

In his keynote speech, Oregon Senator Ron Wyden recognized all the elected officials and said, "All partisan weapons have been checked at the door." Wyden told the crowd, "The Oregon Business Plan (OBP) has been successful because it's based on cooperation, it's bold, it takes a stand and doesn't just run with the pack." He introduced the concept of The Healthy Americans Act which he will soon be introducing in the US Congress. Wyden indicated that this act will be bold and strike at a time when he thinks "bold reform is possible." His legislation is designed to reduce the nation's \$2.3 trillion health care bill which is \$6,000/person/year. He contends that we have enough money in the system; we just don't spend it in the right places. For more information on this act, see: <http://www.wyden.senate.gov/>.

A breakout session on health care went into more detail on the health care quality/cost problem. Part of the session reviewed information in the Health Care [Policy Playbook](#) (see page 57 for an overview of the remarks). Former Oregon Governor Kitzhaber spoke about the extent of the funding crisis the nation faces in terms of the unfunded liability

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[Research-Based Market Segmentation: What You Should Know](#)
[Marketing & Sales SIG](#)

September 27, 2007
[Agile QA Reality or Fantasy: A Conversation](#)
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the baby boomers will put on the system. Kitzhaber promoted the **Oregon Better Health Act** as a solution. This act will be introduced into the Oregon legislature next month. If passed, it will position Oregon to seek exceptions from the federal government to allow Oregon to use federal and state dollars in a way that makes sense to us.

Goals for economic development in Oregon

This session covered the goals of the incoming legislature and a vision of economic development for the state. Karen Minnis, the outgoing Speaker of the Oregon House of Representatives, thanked everyone she had been associated with in her tenure in the House and introduced the incoming Speaker Jeff Merkley. He spoke of his vision that "Oregon will have the best bi-partisan problem-solving legislature in America."

In his presentation, **Wally Van Valkenburg** indicated that last year's OBP and the cluster approach to economic development are working and that Oregon has arrived on the world stage. During October 8 – 12 the **Competitiveness Conference** will be coming to Portland; this event draws a worldwide audience.

Malia Wasson, president of US Bank Oregon, spoke about the cyclical nature of the state's funding and called on the governor and the legislature to take a long-term view – 10 years ahead – in managing the state's funding resources.

Oregon's competitive advantage

Kirby Dyess, of Austin Capital Management, opened this session by describing sustainability and suggested that Oregon is there. Dyess stated, "Oregon is known for our efforts and accomplishments in the university system both in academia and research as well as in the commercial arena. This view is held worldwide and we in the state don't realize the significance."

David Chen, OVP Venture Partners, provided an update on **Oregon InC**. Chen indicated that the 2007 Innovation Plan recommendations are:

- Continue investment in ONAMI, the state's first successful signature research center focused on nanotechnology and microtechnology;
- Support development of the nation's first commercial-scale wave energy park, building on Oregon State University's world-leading research on wave energy, the state's manufacturing expertise and Oregon's identification by the Electric Power Research Institute as the "ideal location for wave energy conversion";
- Establish a partnership between industry and the existing Food Innovation Center to assist food processors around the state in identifying innovative ways to expand markets, increase productivity and pioneer developments in food packaging and processing;
- Enhance training and R&D resources in value-added manufacturing processes to ensure that the manufacturing industry (where 1 in 7 Oregonians are employed) can remain competitive in the global economy;
- Create a new signature research center, focused on research and development in clean energy, bio-based products and green construction. The center will build on Oregon's existing international reputation as a leader in renewable energy, leverage ONAMI technology platforms and bolster Oregon's rural economy by creating new value-added products from forests and agricultural land; and
- Launch an additional signature research center to develop and commercialize new drugs to fight infectious diseases.

Randy Miller, chairman of The Moore Company, spoke about the continuation of the "Brand Oregon" campaign with a focus on sustainable business and environmental practices that could help define the state in the global marketplace and give it a competitive advantage. Governor Kulongoski has put \$1.6 M in the budget to fund a Brand Oregon campaign.

Governor Kulongoski on economic development and funding

Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski opened the afternoon session. Kulongoski stated, "Oregon is positioned to be a national leader in

sustainable energy.” He praised OBP as a true partnership between business and government. He pointed out that “a sound business plan can help form solid public policy.” Kulongoski suggested that Oregon has emerged from a hard time and the state can either coast or try to do more—his budget is an attempt to do more. Kulongoski indicates that Oregon needs to fix the revenue system by saving and investing. He described how his state budget proposal, including a plan to redirect the corporate “kicker” tax refund to a rainy day fund, would help state government weather lean years and avoid cutbacks. Kulongoski believes the corporate minimum tax is outdated and needs to be increased to a fair level. His proposal would increase the \$10 corporate minimum tax to fund preschool education for 3- and 4-year-old children, boost college funding and improve worker training. Kulongoski wants to spend \$8 billion on education in the coming biennium which is 15 percent more than the current biennium. He also spoke about the need to increase the transparency of educational spending and consolidating teacher’s health insurance

Oregon’s transportation system

Oregon Senate President Peter Courtney challenged business leaders and lawmakers to develop a more comprehensive transportation plan. Courtney believes the state is in dire need of infrastructure and capacity building and no one seems to own the problem. There is no mandate in the Oregon constitution or legislation to maintain and improve the transportation infrastructure. Courtney stated, “We need viable owners with committed funding.” His challenge is to prioritize transportation in the same way we do education and health care.

The summit was a success

The fifth Leadership Summit provided an arena where business representatives, educators, investment firms, state leadership and citizens could come together to work for a better Oregon. In addition to discussions, goals were set and assignments made to implement some of the topics discussed during the session.

About the author

Linda Barney is the founder and owner of Barney and Associates, a technical and marketing writing firm. Founded in 1990, Barney and Associates specializes in technical writing, documentation, online help, web content and training. Barney and Associates also provides a wide range of marketing writing services including creating media articles, white papers, data sheets, solution briefs, case studies and reviewer’s guides. Contact Linda at linda@barneyassoc.com.

