



Jason Atkinson

Senator Jason A. Atkinson Update
OREGON STATE SENATE DISTRICT 2
JUNE 2008

LEGISLATIVE "TEN PERCENTERS"

By Sen. Jason Atkinson

Do you remember “the Fonz” from *Happy Days*? He’d walk in, pop two thumbs up and say “Aaay!” and girls would magnetically be pulled into his arms. While **the Oregon Legislature** isn’t exactly *Happy Days*, there are a few Fonzie’s, a few Richies, a few Joanies, one or two Mr. Cs and Mrs. Cs, several Ralph Malphs and Potsies, and the occasional sighting of Pinky Tuscadero.

But the problem is *Happy Days* was a fictional TV show, and many Oregonians view **public service** and the Oregon Legislature the same way—as fiction—not real and not relevant. I confess it bothers me. Why can’t we restore honor to public service?

Atkinson Leads Trip to Iraq

Last month, Sen. Atkinson led a group of American political and business leaders to Kurdistan in Iraq. The group was primarily made up of Oregonians. The May trip was Sen. Atkinson’s second to Iraq, but the first of the Leader-to-Leader exchange program. **The Leader-to-Leader exchange program** intends to promote business and educational opportunities between the Oregon and Kurdistan.

Kurdistan is the region in northern Iraq. In 2005, Oregon began a **sister-state relationship** with Kurdistan. Under Saddam, Kurdistan was the most oppressed region in Iraq. Today Kurdistan is safe and thriving. But Kurdistan still needs help from American companies to grow. With its friendship with Kurdistan, Oregon has a unique opportunity to invest in Iraq. In particular, Oregon’s expertise in agriculture and natural resources could be a valuable asset for Kurdistan. Sen. Atkinson’s goal is to see Oregon play the key role in helping reforest and restore agriculture in Iraq.

The goal of the May trip was to **develop relationships** between political and business leaders in the U.S. and Iraq. The delegation included three Oregonians: Tim Bernasek, agricultural attorney, CEO Rick Miller of Avermere Health Services, and Jeff Kohnstamm, President of Timberline Lodge and Oregon Tourism Commissioner. Joining them were Former Lieutenant Governor Michael Steele of Maryland, and Attorney General Jon Bruning of Nebraska.

The high point of the trip was the meeting with **Prime Minister of Kurdistan Nechervan Barzani**. Agricultural Minister Abdul-Aziz Tayeb Ahmad also met with the group. Both expressed Kurdistan's desire to work with Oregon. In particular, they need help with food processing, replanting forests and range management.

The trip was a success. One early snag—lost bags— was quickly fixed by a run to an Iraqi department store. That aside, the delegation enjoyed the adventure and the Prime Minister was pleased with the success of the Leader-to-Leader exchange. Later this year Sen. Atkinson will led another delegation to Iraq. This trip will focus on agriculture. We can be proud Oregon will play a major role in **rebuilding Iraq**.

Sen. Atkinson wrote an article for *WorldNetDaily* on the Iraq situation.

War Memorial Groundbreaking Ceremony

Sen. Atkinson spent Memorial Day at the groundbreaking ceremony for the planned war memorial in Central Point. The war memorial will be the only war memorial in southern Oregon. The memorial will honor Oregonians who have given their lives in service to their country. Thanks go to **Marty Terrell of Central Point** and **Rep. Dennis Richardson** for their leadership and dedication to this memorial. More than 100 people attended to groundbreaking ceremony, including many veterans, young and old. U.S. Senator Gordon Smith also spoke at the ceremony. The war memorial will be completed by Veterans' Day.

Looking for a Speaker?

Would you like Sen. Atkinson to speak to your business or political group about restoring honor to public service or his recent trip to Iraq?

Please call Sen. Atkinson's office to schedule a time for Sen. Atkinson to speak with your group.

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