

SPEECH, GOVERNOR VICTOR ATIYEH
THIRD ANNUAL VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION DINNER
ALBANY FIRE DEPARTMENT
AMERICAN LEGION POST 10, ALBANY
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PREPARED TEXT

I AM VERY HAPPY TO BE HERE TONIGHT TO HELP HONOR THE
MANY FINE VOLUNTEER FIRE FIGHTERS HERE IN ALBANY AND THE
MID-VALLEY AREA.

THERE IS AN AWFUL LOT OF HEROISM AND PLAIN HARD WORK
HERE IN THE AMERICAN LEGION HALL TONIGHT. STRENGTH, DEDICATION,
AND READINESS TO HELP OTHERS ARE ALSO THREE OF THE QUALITIES
REPRESENTED HERE. BUT ABOVE ALL WE SEE A QUALITY OF DEEP
COMMITMENT -- COMMITMENT TO FELLOW CITIZENS AND COMMITMENT TO THE
COMMUNITY AT LARGE.

VOLUNTEER FIRE FIGHTERS MEAN A LOT TO OREGON.

VOLUNTEERS MAKE UP OVER 72 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL
FIREFIGHTING FORCE IN OUR STATE. THESE VOLUNTEERS UNSELFISHLY
DONATE HUNDREDS OF HOURS OF EACH YEAR TO PROTECT THEIR
COMMUNITIES FROM THE PERILS OF FIRE AND OTHER EMERGENCIES. EVERY
DAY IN OREGON THESE VOLUNTEERS ARE READY TO PLACE THEIR LIVES ON
THE LINE TO PROTECT THEIR NEIGHBORS.

WHAT DO THEY RECEIVE IN RETURN FOR THE LONG HOURS AND THE HIGH RISK? SIMPLE SATISFACTION -- A KIND OF SATISFACTION THAT ONLY A FIRE FIGHTER AND A VOLUNTEER COULD UNDERSTAND.

- IT IS SATISFACTION THAT THEY HAVE DONE THEIR BEST TO SAVE LIVES;

- IT IS SATISFACTION THAT THEY HAVE PROTECTED PROPERTY; AND

- IT IS SATISFACTION THAT THEY HAVE MADE A UNIQUE, UNREPAYABLE CONTRIBUTION TO THE COMMUNITY IN WHICH THEY LIVE.

THESE ARE THE SIMPLE REWARDS FOR DUTIES THAT CAN BE VERY COMPLICATED, AND SACRIFICES THAT ONLY A VOLUNTEER WOULD MAKE -- SUCH AS LONG HOURS OF TRAINING, UNUSUAL HOURS OF FIRES, MANY HOURS SPENT ON PROJECTS FOR FUND RAISERS, AND -- LAST BUT CERTAINLY NOT LEAST -- THE HOURS A VOLUNTEER FIRE FIGHTER MUST SPEND AWAY FROM THEIR FAMILY. THE SPOUSE OF A VOLUNTEER FIRE FIGHTER MAKES MANY SACRIFICES THAT WE MUST NEVER FORGET, WHETHER IT IS WARMING UP A COLD MEAL, TAKING CARE THAT PROTECTIVE CLOTHING IS READY TO GO AT A MOMENT'S NOTICE, OR JUST BEING SUPPORTIVE AND CHEERFUL DESPITE THE FREQUENT ABSENCES OF A LOVED ONE.

IT TAKES A VERY SPECIAL PERSON TO BE A VOLUNTEER. ONE THAT IS UNSELFISH OF THEIR TIME, AND CARES FOR THEIR COMMUNITY AND THEIR FELLOW MAN.

WHERE DO WE FIND THE ROOTS OF SUCH DEDICATION AND WILLINGNESS? I THINK THAT THE ANSWER LIES IN BOTH OUR HISTORY AND OURSELVES.

HISTORY TELLS US THAT AMERICANS ARE A FEISTY, SELF-RELIANT LOT... TENDING TO RELY ON EACH OTHER RATHER THAN ON OUTSIDE HELP TO GET THE JOB DONE.

ALMOST 150 YEARS AGO, ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE, A FRENCHMAN VISITING AMERICA, COMMENTED ON OUR GREAT SPIRIT OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY. HE SAID, "THIS IS UNIQUE IN AMERICA -- THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF SOCIAL GOALS WHICH ELSEWHERE PEOPLE ARE CONTENT TO TURN OVER TO GOVERNMENT."

DE TOCQUEVILLE TRAVELED THROUGHOUT EARLY AMERICA, AND NOTICED THIS SPIRIT EVERYWHERE. PEOPLE GAVE EACH OTHER A HAND WHETHER IT WAS RAISING A BARN OR HARVESTING A CROP. HE SAW THE SPIRIT OF SELF-RELIANCE MANIFESTED IN A SPIRIT OF NEIGHBORLINESS -- PEOPLE WHO DEPENDED ON EACH OTHER TO SURVIVE WERE FIERCELY PROUD THAT THEIR EFFORTS HELPED THEIR COMMUNITY SUCCEED ON ITS OWN RESOURCES.

THE HISTORY OF OREGON, AS MOST OF YOU KNOW, IS AS SOLIDLY SELF-RELIANT AND FIERCELY INDEPENDENT AS THE REST OF THE COUNTRY -- MORE SO THAN MOST, I SHOULD SAY. FROM OUR FUR TRADERS TO OUR LUMBER TRADERS, OUR FISHERMEN TO OUR CATTLEMEN, WE HAVE BUILT OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS ON BOTH OUR DETERMINATION AND OUR COOPERATION.

THAT SPIRIT IS VERY MUCH ALIVE TODAY. NONE OF US WOULD BE HERE TONIGHT IF IT WERE NOT. KEEPING THAT SPIRIT ALIVE, AS MANY OF YOU KNOW, HAS BEEN ONE OF MY MAJOR GOALS AS GOVERNOR.

IN 1979 I SAID, "THE INCREASING ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN OUR LIVES HAS BEEN A TEMPTATION TO ABANDON OUR SENSE OF COMMUNITY. INSTEAD OF CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER, WE HIRE GOVERNMENT TO DO THE JOB. OUR TAX DOLLARS HAVE TOO OFTEN BEEN USED TO BUY ESCAPE FROM PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY, AND WE ARE THE POORER FOR IT. WHEN WE TRADE THE JOY OF HELPING OTHERS FOR THE ANONYMOUS EXERCISE OF PAYING TAX DOLLARS TO BUY SOCIAL SERVICES, WE -- ALL OF US -- ARE THE LOSERS."

IN MY FIRST INAUGURAL ADDRESS, I ASKED OREGONIANS TO BACK THEIR DEMANDS FOR LESS GOVERNMENT AND LESS TAXES WITH A COMMITMENT TO DO FOR EACH OTHER -- IN PERSON -- MUCH OF WHAT WE HAVE BEEN ASKING GOVERNMENT TO DO FOR US. AND I PROMISED THAT WE IN THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE WOULD TRY TO LEAD BY EXAMPLE, AND MAKE SPECIAL EFFORTS TO PROVIDE RECOGNITION FOR INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP VOLUNTEER ACHIEVEMENTS.

PART OF THAT EFFORT WAS THE WORK UNDERTAKEN BY MY TASK FORCE ON VOLUNTARISM. THEIR REPORT LED TO A MAJOR NEW COMMITMENT TO VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS WITHIN GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE INDUSTRY THROUGHOUT OREGON. IN OUR DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES ALONE, MORE THAN 5,000 VOLUNTEERS A MONTH ASSIST US IN PROGRAMS THAT HELP THE ELDERLY, THE SICK, AND THE DISABLED. IN MY OFFICE, WE COORDINATE THE EFFORTS OF OREGON FOOD SHARE, A PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP THAT LAST YEAR COLLECTED AND DISTRIBUTED MORE THAN ONE MILLION POUNDS OF FOOD FOR OREGON'S NEEDY CITIZENS. THIS WOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE SELFLESS EFFORTS OF FOOD DISTRIBUTORS, CITIZENS, STATE EMPLOYEES, WHOLESALERS, AND COUNTLESS GENEROUS PUBLIC SERVICE GROUPS THROUGHOUT OREGON.

ULTIMATELY, THESE KINDS OF EFFORTS -- TOGETHER WITH SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENTS LIKE THOSE OF THE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS REPRESENTED HERE IN THIS ROOM -- MEAN THAT OREGONIANS HAVE RESPONDED TO THE CALL FOR VOLUNTEERISM AS NEVER BEFORE.

YOU HAVE RESPONDED. MAGNIFICENTLY. MORE OREGONIANS THAN EVER ARE REACHING OUT TO ONE ANOTHER -- GIVING OF THEIR TIME -- THEIR TALENT -- AND THEIR ENERGY.

YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT IN THE MEANTIME YOUR STATE GOVERNMENT IS STRONGLY WORKING TO BUILD ON YOUR GOOD EFFORTS.

LAST SUMMER, WE HELD A MAJOR CONFERENCE ON CORPORATE VOLUNTARISM AND PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP. IN PART, THE CONFERENCE WAS INTENDED TO BUILD ON OUR SUCCESS, AND IN PART RESPOND TO THE CHANGING FISCAL AND POLICY LANDSCAPE WE SEE AT THE LEVEL OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

THE ATTENDANCE WAS REMARKABLE: CITY, COUNTY, BUSINESS, VOLUNTEERS, AND COMMUNITY GROUPS... AND MAJOR LEADERS FROM EVERY SECTOR OF GOVERNMENT, SUCH AS SENATOR HATFIELD AND VICE PRESIDENT BUSH. THAT CONFERENCE RESULTED IN A COMMISSION WHICH HAS GIVEN US AN UP-TO-DATE BLUEPRINT ON WHERE TO FOCUS OUR COUNTLESS VOLUNTEER EFFORTS DURING CHANGING ECONOMIC TIMES. THIS IS PARTICULARLY CRITICAL AS THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS MOVING STRONGLY TO TRANSFER RESPONSIBILITY FOR MANY PROGRAMS AND POLICIES FROM THE FEDERAL TO THE STATE AND LOCAL LEVELS.

THE NAME FOR THIS IS "NEW FEDERALISM." AND FOR OREGON TO MEET THIS CHALLENGE, WE REALIZE ABOVE ALL THAT THERE MUST BE A MAJOR RENEWED PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND THE PRIVATE SECTORS. BY BUILDING A NETWORK OF MUTUAL COOPERATION, AND PROVIDING RECOGNITION FOR THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS WE MAKE THROUGH THAT COOPERATION, WE WILL ALL HAVE A SHARE IN THE GOOD THAT WILL RESULT.

WE ARE CONTINUING OUR EFFORTS AT RECOGNITION IN EVERY POSSIBLE WAY. RIGHT AT THIS MOMENT, MY OFFICE IS SEEKING AND COLLECTING NOMINATIONS FOR THE 1983 GOVERNOR'S VOLUNTARISM AWARDS. I WILL BE MAKING THESE AWARDS IN APRIL TO INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS IN OREGON WHO HAVE MADE OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER EFFORTS WITHIN THE STATE.

WHEN WE SPEAK OF HONORS AND AWARDS, HOWEVER, WE MUST REMEMBER AT THE SAME TIME THAT IT IS NOT THE RECOGNITION -- IT IS THE ACTION ITSELF THAT IS MOST IMPORTANT.

NO ONE COULD RECOGNIZE THAT MORE KEENLY THAN THE COMMUNITIES, FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS HERE TONIGHT WHOSE LIVES AND PROPERTY HAVE BEEN PRESERVED OR PROTECTED BY THE ACTION OF A VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER.

ULTIMATELY, ANY VOLUNTEER PROGRAM, COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM, OR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTING PROGRAM MUST NATURALLY DEPEND NOT JUST ON RECOGNITION -- BUT ON RESULTS.

YET BY RECOGNIZING THOSE RESULTS, WE HELP SEND A MESSAGE TO EVERYONE IN THE COMMUNITY -- A VITAL MESSAGE. THAT MESSAGE SAYS: "JOIN IN, HELP OUT, AND PUT YOUR TALENTS TO WORK. SHOW THAT YOU CARE -- BECAUSE THE GREATEST REWARD WILL BE YOUR OWN PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT."

THE OLD FEDERALIST FISHER AMES ONCE MADE THIS
DISTINCTION BETWEEN DEMOCRACY AND MONARCHY.

"MONARCHY IS LIKE A SPLENDID SHIP, WITH ALL SAILS SET;
IT MOVES MAJESTICALLY ON, THEN IT HITS A ROCK AND SINKS FOREVER.

"DEMOCRACY, HOWEVER, IS LIKE A RAFT. IT NEVER SINKS,
BUT, OCCASIONALLY YOU HAVE TO GET YOUR FEET WET."

AS CITIZENS THROUGHOUT OREGON AND THE NATION ASK FOR
LESS GOVERNMENT AND A BIGGER SHARE OF LOCAL RESPONSIBILITY, THERE
ARE A GOOD MANY OF YOU WHO CAN EXPECT MORE THAN EVER TO GET YOUR
FEET WET.

THAT IS AS IT SHOULD BE.

I BELIEVE VERY DEEPLY THAT THE STRENGTH OF OUR NATION
WILL ALWAYS BE MEASURED BY THE STRENGTH OF EACH ONE OF US. THE
STRONGER WE ARE -- THE STRONGER OUR NATION AND OUR STATE WILL BE.

EVERY GOVERNOR OF OREGON HAS BROUGHT HIS PERSONAL
PHILOSOPHY AND PRIORITIES TO THIS HIGH OFFICE. AND I AM
CERTAINLY NO EXCEPTION. I CAN TELL ALL OF YOU THAT I HAVE VERY
FEW PRIORITIES THAT ARE HIGHER FOR ME THAN THIS PROCESS OF
BRINGING OUR PEOPLE TOGETHER -- PUTTING CITIZENS IN TOUCH WITH
ONE ANOTHER TO BETTER THEIR COMMUNITIES AND THEIR STATE.

ULTIMATELY, I BELIEVE THAT A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY... COMMUNITY SPIRIT... UNDERSTANDING AND COMPASSION... MUST COME NOT FROM GOVERNMENT, BUT FROM EACH OF US AS INDIVIDUALS.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN, WHEN HE WAS ASKED WHAT GOVERNMENT WAS GOING TO DO ABOUT A PARTICULAR PROBLEM, PUT IT VERY SUCCINCTLY:

"YOU CANNOT BRING ABOUT PROSPERITY BY DISCOURAGING THRIFT.

"YOU CANNOT HELP THE WAGE EARNER BY PULLING DOWN THE WAGE PAYER.

"YOU CANNOT BUILD CHARACTER AND COURAGE BY TAKING AWAY MAN'S INITIATIVE AND INDEPENDENCE;

"AND MOST IMPORTANT, YOU CANNOT HELP MEN PERMANENTLY BY DOING FOR THEM WHAT THEY COULD AND SHOULD DO FOR THEMSELVES."

GOVERNMENT GIVES US THE STRUCTURE, PROVIDES US THE TOOLS, BUT IT CAN NEVER PROVIDE UNDERSTANDING, WILLINGNESS, AND RESPONSIBILITY.

THESE ARE GIFTS THAT COME FROM US ALONE -- AND THEY ARE PART OF THE GIFT OF LIFE -- TRULY, THE GREATEST GIFT OF ALL.

THE STRENGTH, THE DEDICATION, THE READINESS TO HELP A FELLOW HUMAN BEING THAT WE RECOGNIZE ON THIS OCCASION ARE QUALITIES THAT NO ONE CAN REWARD OR RETURN IN FULL MEASURE. BUT BY HIGHLIGHTING VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTING WORK AND ACTIONS, WE MAKE IT THAT MUCH EASIER FOR EVERY CITIZEN TO JOIN TOGETHER TO TAKE ACTION THEMSELVES.

PEOPLE WORKING TOGETHER BUILT OUR STATE AND BUILT OUR COUNTRY. INDIVIDUALLY, WE CAN DO LITTLE. BUT TOGETHER, THERE IS LITTLE THAT WE CANNOT DO.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

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