

March 14, 2009

## This week's winners and losers in the news

**WINNER:** United Way of Mid-Willamette Valley. Private and public employees helped the United Way reach its goal of raising \$2 million for area health and human services programs.

**TOSSUP:** University of Oregon's new president. It was a slam-dunk. Richard W. Lariviere, the only finalist, was appointed Friday as next president of the UO.

The University of Kansas provost might have been an outstanding prospect, but the closed selection process makes a mockery of Oregon's open government. That process won't help the Oregon University System as it seeks improved state funding.

**WINNER:** Blue skies. Although rain is forecast for this weekend, the past week's wonderfully clear skies have made the days seem more enjoyable and the region's economic problems appear just a bit smaller.

**WINNER:** Generous Mid-Valley restaurants. "Newport Seafood Grill is a wonderful example of doing their part in the helping out with the economy," wrote one appreciative couple. The Salem restaurant is among those providing gift certificates or coupons, which help economically struggling families enjoy a dinner out.

**WINNER:** Oregon courts. Although they were closed Friday, they'll return to being open five days a week — at least through June. Judicial and legislative leaders this week reached agreement about how to pay for the courts. But how did the state suddenly find the money and why couldn't this have been resolved earlier?

**LOSER:** Polk County District Attorney Stan Butterfield. The debacle of his dismissing deputy district attorneys has ended with their being eligible for reinstatement.

**WINNER:** Portland State. The men's basketball team won the Big Sky Conference, gaining a second consecutive berth in the NCAA tournament.

**TOSSUP:** Foreclosures. Nationally, they're increasing. But the rate is dropping in Oregon, especially in Marion and Polk counties, which is good news for the area economy. Still, Oregon's overall rate was the nation's ninth-highest in February.

**WINNER:** Call-center hiring. TRG Customer Solutions will hire 350 more workers at its Bend call center, which is a technical-support and customer-service center for Apple products. The popularity of Apple products led to the call center's growth.

**WINNER:** Federal disaster aid to Oregon. State and local governments, as well as some nonprofits, in Marion and Polk counties are eligible for federal aid from December's winter storms. A federal aid declaration covered eight Oregon counties.

**TOSSUP:** Ending the electoral college. The Oregon House has passed legislation that supports a

popular vote for president. But as a small state, Oregon benefits from the electoral college in some ways.

WINNER: Pay for performance. President Obama this week endorsed the concept of linking teacher pay with excellence in the classroom. Working with the innovative Chalkboard Project, several Oregon school districts already are trying new approaches to pay.

### **Our Viewpoint**

## **Additional Facts**

Suggestions

Send your nominations for Winners and Losers to the Statesman Journal Editorial Board at [salemed@StatesmanJournal.com](mailto:salemed@StatesmanJournal.com) or by mail to the Editorial Board, Statesman Journal, P.O. Box 13009, Salem, OR 97309-3009.

---