



PORTLAND, OREGON'S NEWS WEEKLY. NEWS AND CULTURE FOR FEBRUARY 10TH

### CLASSIFIEDS

- Jobs
- Real Estate
- Rentals
- Services
- Health & Wellness
- Community
- Buy, Sell, Trade
- Musicians

### FINDER

Find a finder

### NEWS

- Cover Story
- News Stories
- Politics
- Sam Adams
- Rogue of the Week
- Willamette Week on KATU
- Willamette Week on KPOJ (mp3)
- Dr. Know
- Murmurs
- Inbox
- Ask the Editor
- WWire [Blog](#)

### CULTURE

- Scoop
- Feature Stories
- Hot Seat Q&A
- Headout
- Cheap Skate
- Comics
- Special Sections
- Retail Therapist

### MUSIC

- Show Previews
- Album Reviews
- Live Reviews
- Club Spotlight
- Live Music Calendar
- On the Radar
- Cut of the Day
- Tour Diaries
- Local Cut [Blog](#)

### SCREEN

- Film Reviews

## News and Culture

The Blog Formerly Known As WWire

« [Final Offers: Portland Public Schools and Portland Association of Teachers Saltzman to Grand Jury in Campbell Shooting: 'Immediate Action'](#) »

### Wheeler's State of the County Speech: Gov. Ted?

3:30 PM February 12th, 2010 by James Pitkin

Multnomah County / News / Politics | [Email This Post](#) |



Multnomah County Chair **Ted Wheeler's** annual "State of the County" [speech](#) today to the City Club of Portland turned into a test-run for how this ambitious pol would handle some of the state's most pressing issues.

But first came his meat-and-potatoes rundown of the issues facing the county.

Entering the final year of his first term and facing [little opposition](#) in his re-election bid so far, Wheeler gave a 40-minute speech touting the county's successes despite yearly budget cuts and an economy in freefall.

"We used it as an opportunity to think and act anew," Wheeler said of the recession, citing his efforts to boost the SUN Schools program, open a comprehensive domestic-violence center with the city and build a mental-health crisis center by 2012.

Wheeler also took the opportunity to break news, announcing for the first time a new low-income health and dental clinic the county will open this year in Rockwood with the nonprofit [CareOregon](#).

The chairman took a moment to address friction with interim Sheriff **Dan Staton**, who opposes Wheeler's efforts to bring local jails under control of the county commissioners.

#### Related P

1. [Ad: I'll I Sel You Cor Hot](#)
2. [Cor ove Sta \(Uç Lur con](#)
3. [Wh to C Stri Mul](#)
4. [Ad: Re: Wh Wc Pot Mul](#)
5. [Wh Kic Re- Cai Cor Mul](#)

Movie Times  
Brew Views

**DISH**

Restaurant Reviews  
Restaurant Guide 2009  
Food Event Calendar

**PERFORMANCE**

Show Previews  
Live Reviews  
Stage Calendar  
Classical/Opera  
Calendar  
Dance Calendar

**VISUAL ARTS**

Gallery/Show Reviews  
Gallery Calendar

**WORDS**

Book Reviews  
Words Event Calendar

**OUTDOORS**

Outdoors Events

**MATCHMAKER**

Chance Meeting  
Get Love  
Get Lucky

**PROMOTIONS**

Free Stuff / Contests  
Swag Rag Newsletter  
WW Sponsored Events  
Musicfest NW  
Candidates Gone Wild  
Give!Guide  
WW Store

**GET A PAPER**

Subscribe  
Find My WW  
Buy a Guide

"I respect Sheriff Staton," Wheeler said. "We have an honest disagreement on the structure of the county jails. But it's up to the community ultimately to decide" the best way to run county corrections.

Perhaps to the discomfort of Portland Mayor **Sam Adams**, City Commissioner **Amanda Fritz** and other city officials in the room, Wheeler brought up the 2006 death of **James Chasse Jr.** in police custody, saying "no crisis has focused my administration more."

The county last summer settled for \$925,000 with Chasse's family, while the city of Portland remains the only defendant in the family's massive pending civil-rights lawsuit.

An audience member asked Wheeler if he believes the city attorneys' contention that an unbiased jury can't be found in Portland for the Chasse trial. The city is seeking to move the trial for that reason. Wheeler said he disagrees.

"I do believe you can find impartial people in this community on any subject," Wheeler said. "The key is finding people who are not afraid to be wrong."

For those who have followed Wheeler's political career — from his **first bid** for office in 2006 to his rapid rise as one of the most respected public officials in the region — the Q-and-A session provided a glimpse into his thinking on statewide issues.

It was interesting because while Wheeler has been coy about whether he aspires to higher office, observers and people who work with him believe a future run is highly likely.

Asked what he thinks of the Legislature's decision this week to block Gov. **Ted Kulongoski's** bid to **reform the kicker**, Wheeler railed against what he called a "boneheaded" and "completely dysfunctional" revenue system in Oregon.


Wheeler said he would scrap the entire system and start from scratch, including canning the kicker, which gives back tax revenues that exceed state economists' forecasts by more than 2 percent.

"I took economics," Wheeler said. "**Most economists can't find their way to the classroom**, much less predict state revenue within 2 percent."

Another audience member asked Wheeler about predictions that PERS will bankrupt the state. Wheeler said there's little chance the Democratic-controlled Legislature will take on the problem, and the responsibility rests squarely with the governor's office.

"I believe that's an executive decision," Wheeler said. **WW**

**Share and Enjoy:**

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

ADVERTISING