

Note: This transcript was substantially edited for accuracy, clarity, and legibility by Gene Derfler and Kevin Pozzi in September of 2015.

Gene Derfler Interview

Wednesday, 6/10/15

INTERVIEWER: Greetings. My name is Jim Knight. I've served 29 years on the staff of the Department of Land Conservation and Development, DLCD. I retired in 2003. Today is Wednesday, June 10, 2015. It's my good fortune to speak with Gene Derfler, who has agreed to be interviewed as part of Portland State University's oral history project of Oregon's statewide land use planning program. Today's interview is taking place in the main DLCD office in Salem, Oregon. Before starting the interview, I'd like to take this opportunity to offer several brief remarks. First, I want to express my sincere appreciation to Gene and the many other Oregonian's whose vision, leadership and involvement did so much to make the enactment and implementation of Senate Bill 100 possible. Second, for those who may not know, you may ask, what is an oral history project? In terms of this project, the overall goal is to document and preserve a record of Oregon's land use program through the collecting and archiving of personal oral histories. To achieve this goal, the project's principal objectives are to generate new relevant primary source material and historical records for research projects, publications, and articles on Oregon's land use planning, to identify and further understand the views, opinions and interests of many organizations, agencies, officials and citizens who actively participated in the drafting, adoption and implementation of Oregon land use statutes, statewide planning goals and administrative rules, make available historical records and materials of specific interest to various local, state and federal agencies, tribal governments, public and private interest groups and organizations, academic institutions and the general public in order to enable comparison of the current State of Oregon's

land use program with the views, opinions and recollections of various participants regarding their visions and intentions behind the passage of Senate Bill 100 and its implementation. Third, we interviewers, and the individuals being interviewed, referred to as narrators in this first group, and those in the months ahead, are the project's most visible participants. However, much is owed to those behind the scene at PSU's College of Urban and Public Affairs working in collaboration with LCDC and DLCD overseeing the project's many details of organization, management and funding. Four, we reserve our special thanks to Sy Adler and Kevin Pozzi at PSU and Jim Rue and Rob Hallyburton at DLCD. Finally, in May, 2013, DLCD held a special gathering to mark the 40th anniversary of the enactment of Senate Bill 100 and the start of Oregon's land use program. I was asked, along with others, to offer some remarks to commemorate this historic occasion. No, don't worry, I'm not going to delay today getting into my talks with that occasion, however, here are the quotes from two of the land use program's champions that I feel are very relevant as we start this project. First, here are Governor Tom McCall's stirring words in 1973, speaking about the people, environment, and livability of the state he loved and what I'm sure he believed is the continuing challenge of land use planning in Oregon. Here are his words. "We're talking more than preserving the beauty of Oregon. We're talking about the growth of Oregon and how that growth can be accomplished in a sane manner. We are talking about the economy and the environment. We're talking about balance. In short, we're talking about people and the land." And the other quote is from the person I feel is the land use program's true patriarch. This person, of course, is Hector MacPherson. Here are his inspiring words, expressed in 1992, about the birth of the land use program and its importance for Oregon's future. "No, I did not know what I was creating. I think the most remarkable thing is that we are here 20 years later after the enactment of Senate Bill 100 in 1973, and that it has been enough of a success to last at least this long. I knew that land use

was a tremendously divisive type thing . When I got into this thing none of the other legislators, except for Ted Hallick, wanted to join me because they didn't feel it was anything that would enhance their political stature. And, of course, we had a number of times since then when I wondered if it was going to last through the next election. So, I guess, the most delightful thing was that it is really still here, and that it's gotten some national recognition, and it's recognized at least by some people in the state of Oregon as having been desirable. I just hope with all the uncertainty that I see out there in the future that we can progress at least as well in the future as we have in the past. I really have some confidence that the voters are sensible to recognize the strength of a program like this." Thank you Tom and Hector for your very moving comments. Now let's get on with today's interview. Gene, I'm going to read Question No. 1 and --

GENE DERFLER: Okay.

INTERVIEWER: -- it's up to you after that. Why don't we begin by having you --

GENE DERFLER: Are you going to turn the camera on?

INTERVIEWER: Huh? It -- it is on.

GENE DERFLER: Did you turn it on?

INTERVIEWER: Yep.

GENE DERFLER: Oh.

INTERVIEWER: I think so. (Pause)

GENE DERFLER: We'd end up with a blank camera.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. It's on.

GENE DERFLER: Okay.

INTERVIEWER: Yep. Thank you. No. 1. Why don't we begin by having you give us a brief back -- personal background of you and your family's arrival, settlement, and life in

Oregon?

GENE DERFLER: Oh. Well, I was born in Portland. Actually, I was born in my grandma's bedroom because in those years usually that's what happened when you came into this world, you went to somebody's home and were born. I actually grew up in Southwest Washington. My folks had a farm up on the Lewis River, east of Woodland about 10 miles, and I grew up there and graduated from high school. I started on to college. I went to Bellingham, after spending a summer working in the woods, and started to school and shortly after I started school, of course, it was during the war.

INTERVIEWER: What war was this?

GENE DERFLER: Second World War.

INTERVIEWER: World War?

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm. And so, but anyway, Jack Dempsey, who was the world champion fighter, was at full command in the Navy, came around to the school recruiting people to go into the V5 Program, which was the flight training program, and after his talk we, three of us that had gone to school together, decided that we'd all join the Navy, and so the next day we drove down to Seattle and joined. Actually, I was the only one of the three that got into the program and so off I went and went through the flight training program during the war and did some flying.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of plane did you fly?

GENE DERFLER: I ended up flying PBY's, a patrol plane, down in the Caribbean where we did sector searches for submarines and convoy cover flying. So, that was about the extent of my flying. I used to say we were boring wholes in the sky, flying around looking for submarines, and then, of course, after the war I returned back to Oregon. I started to work for Firestone Tire and Rubber Company and I got into a management position with them and was with

them for about six years in different management positions. Decided after a short time that corporate life wasn't something that I was suited for and so another manager and myself started our own business in Salem and we started the furniture and appliance store. He was about 10 years older than I was and retired after a short time, I bought him out, and kept the store for 30 years.

INTERVIEWER: Thirty years?

GENE DERFLER: Thirty years. We started the business with two people and when I sold it to a chain, uh, we had 50 people working there and we became some somewhat the prominent store in Salem for furniture and appliances. So, after I sold the store --

INTERVIEWER: What year would that have been?

GENE DERFLER: Pardon me?

INTERVIEWER: What year was that when you sold?

GENE DERFLER: 1982 is when we sold it.

INTERVIEWER: 1982.

GENE DERFLER: I played around a little bit with real estate. I worked for a friend of mine helping him in his stainless steel canning equipment business, because in 1982, we did have somewhat of a recession and he was having a problem and so I helped him for about a year. Sold real estate for a little bit and decided that I would like to run for the legislature because I had been disappointed in some of the things that were going on in the legislature and especially the Workers' Comp system. We had a problem within our own store with Workers' Comp. We used to hire college kids during the summer to help us deliver, while our people took vacations, and we had an instructor from SAIF come down to tell us how to lift without injuring your back and at the end of that summer I had two kids that were on Workers' Comp with sore backs and couldn't get them off of it.

INTERVIEWER: Oh.

GENE DERFLER: And I ended up putting two more kids through college than I had planned on. So, that was one of the main reasons that I decided to run for the legislature. So, that's how I ended up running for office. I was going to run two years prior to that and my attorney, and my doctor -- or my doctor? My wife talked me out of it. So, the next time it came around I just went down and signed up and decided to run.

INTERVIEWER: What district was that a representative district??

GENE DERFLER: You know, I think it was --

INTERVIEWER: 31 or something like that?

GENE DERFLER: Yeah. I think it was 31.

INTERVIEWER: Um hmm.

GENE DERFLER: And I ran against an incumbent. Everybody said I couldn't win, but there was a lot of people who knew me in Salem, and so I was able to eek out a victory the first time. After that it really wasn't a problem to get re-elected. I mean I won most of the races 65 to 35 percent, so --

INTERVIEWER: Um hmm.

GENE DERFLER: -- it worked out real well.

INTERVIEWER: And you were there in the house for how many years?

GENE DERFLER: I was in the house for six years.

INTERVIEWER: Six years.

GENE DERFLER: And left there and then went to the senate.

INTERVIEWER: Was there a vacancy you were looking at the senate or?

GENE DERFLER: There was a vacancy. Jim Hill, I think, ran for treasurer.

INTERVIEWER: State Treasurer?

GENE DERFLER: Yeah. And there was an opening there and so I ran for that position.

INTERVIEWER: And you were there, I think, what eight years?

GENE DERFLER: Eight years I was in the senate.

INTERVIEWER: Wow.

GENE DERFLER: I was the majority leader for four years and then president of the senate for two years.

INTERVIEWER: Oh.

GENE DERFLER: It was a good -- it was a great experience. The learning experience you get there is just phenomenal. You're constantly learning a lot about a lot of different subjects. You don't really know them in depth --

INTERVIEWER: Right.

GENE DERFLER: -- but certainly you get a broad education in a lot of different subjects.

INTERVIEWER: Um hmm.

GENE DERFLER: Land use being one of them.

INTERVIEWER: Um hmm.

GENE DERFLER: And, you know, when I look at what you're talking about a lot of the work had already been done in land use by that time.

INTERVIEWER: Right. Yeah. Because the bill was passed in '73 and --

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm. And I didn't go in until '89.

INTERVIEWER: '89. So, we were pretty far along --

GENE DERFLER: Yep.

INTERVIEWER: -- but still a lot of things were happening.

GENE DERFLER: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: And so you missed some of the interesting times.

GENE DERFLER: Some of the battles.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Well, the story about the passage of the bill itself is quite a quite a story.

GENE DERFLER: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. So, you mentioned land use. Take a few minutes and give us a sense of your involvement with that subject in general.

GENE DERFLER: You know, I wasn't involved a lot in land use.

INTERVIEWER: Um hmm.

GENE DERFLER: I think if you took your own instance working you were totally dedicated to the one subject and you were totally on land use.

INTERVIEWER: Sort of like an expert. Right?

GENE DERFLER: If -- if I were to ask you something about Workers' Comp --

INTERVIEWER: I wouldn't have known.

GENE DERFLER: -- you wouldn't have known anything about it, or if I were to ask you about some other subjects, but you totally dedicated your time to one issue and that was land use.

INTERVIEWER: Um hmm. Yes.

GENE DERFLER: I did pretty much the same thing when I was in the legislature.

INTERVIEWER: Um hmm.

GENE DERFLER: I worked very hard on getting a Workers' Comp system corrected and we spent a lot of time and it takes a long time to get things through the legislature. It took us

actually until 1995 before we really got the final product that we wanted. There was some corrections in '92, but it was done by a committee and, of course, in committees they -- they try to accommodate everybody and consequently the -- usually the bills are written so they're not -- don't have a lot of teeth in them, and really don't wind up in the end up getting what you really need, but Kevin Mannix and myself we spent about five months on evenings and weekends rewriting the Workers' Comp deal and we were able to get it passed through the senate in '95, and the house also got it passed, and we had to work somewhat with the Governor in order to make sure that he was not too far away and --

INTERVIEWER: Right.

GENE DERFLER: -- he ended up signing the bill.

INTERVIEWER: It must have been a high moment for you?

GENE DERFLER: It really was. You know, when you look at what we accomplished, in 1989 when I came into the house, we were sixth in the nation on cost and we were 47th in benefits for injured workers, and even today, after we got the deal passed, we're still kind of in the middle of the pack. We're probably 25th, I think, in cost and 35th in benefits. So, we really did a great thing for workers because they got a lot better benefits and we really were able to get about a 25 percent reduction in Worker Comp costs and we continued for over the next six or seven years getting a reduction in Workers' Comp costs, a huge benefit for the state of Oregon, while other states were going up and still trying to figure out how to get corrections. We had a corrective bill and I think a very fair bill.

INTERVIEWER: Hmm. They must have come over to you, other states, and maybe asked what was your secret or --

GENE DERFLER: There was a lot of states that contacted us and -- to ask how we did it

and --

INTERVIEWER: Right.

GENE DERFLER: -- of course, every state is different.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, sure.

GENE DERFLER: And I -- you can't take a bill from one state and work at another state because their systems are different.

INTERVIEWER: Sure. Um hmm.

GENE DERFLER: But we've maintained a good system for workers and a good cost for employers. So, it's worked out well.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

GENE DERFLER: And I'm telling you, I worked totally just pretty much on that, just like you did on land use.

INTERVIEWER: Right. Of course, I was a staff person and you were a legislator, so --

GENE DERFLER: In the field that you're asking me about, I was aware, but you have to understand when I came in all the hard work was done.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

GENE DERFLER: And you were now trying to salvage some of the objections that we were getting.

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

GENE DERFLER: And I heard -- I didn't know much about the LCDC. I didn't know too much about land use.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

GENE DERFLER: I was involved in it somewhat from a personal experience because I

owned properties in Salem.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

GENE DERFLER: Some of our properties got down-zoned --

INTERVIEWER: Right.

GENE DERFLER: -- which reduced the value in the end so we couldn't built what we wanted to build on it.

INTERVIEWER: Um hmm.

GENE DERFLER: And so I was a little bit anti-government on it --

INTERVIEWER: Sure.

GENE DERFLER: -- because it effected me adversely and most of the people that I associated with were also having the same problems. So, I was not really pro land use planning coming in.

INTERVIEWER: Who was the lead person say for your party at that time on land use?

GENE DERFLER: I think Chuck Norris.

INTERVIEWER: Chuck Norris?

GENE DERFLER: Chuck Norris was probably the lead on that --

INTERVIEWER: Um hmm.

GENE DERFLER: -- in the legislature and -- and he was very good, very thorough, you know, very considerate, and he helped educate our caucus on why this was necessary and -- and what -- what we were trying to accomplish.

INTERVIEWER: Um hmm. Um hmm.

GENE DERFLER: Again, most of the things I was hearing was from some little lady that had purchased a property 18 years ago and now she finds she couldn't build a house on it.

INTERVIEWER: Right. Or at least in the ways they wanted to. Yeah.

GENE DERFLER: Yeah. So, it -- there was a lot of negative things going around about land use planning at that time.

INTERVIEWER: Well, those things still circulate right now.

GENE DERFLER: Yes, they do.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Number 3, as Oregonians, I know we and our fellow citizens treasure our state's outstanding natural beauty, sites and resources that are not only beautiful but also critical for our state's economy. As you look back over the last 40 years, which of the state's natural resources, do you believe, the State planning program has been the most successful in protecting? Also, if you wish, identify any areas, sites and resources in your view that the planning program has not done enough.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm. Well, I think the big thing, and I believe probably when you first started that idea, was that we were getting a lot of sprawl.

INTERVIEWER: Um hmm.

GENE DERFLER: We had homes being built out in the forest where you didn't have fire protection and yet after the house was built they expected somebody to come and put the fire out if they had one and we weren't -- the businesses weren't always compatible. I remember one time when I was in Hong Kong and there was a tire store one in building and next door was a bakery. Well, it doesn't make good sense to have that kind of a mix and I think we were getting that same type of --

INTERVIEWER: Conflicting use we call it.

GENE DERFLER: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm. So, I -- but I think the big thing that -- that I think we were probably trying to accomplish was to save the farmland and I did have farmers come in and talk to me about the importance of --

INTERVIEWER: Farming.

GENE DERFLER: -- farmland and keeping it so that people couldn't build on it and kept it for farming and, of course, again the urban growth boundary was something that seemed negative to me because a lot of people got rich off of that and a lot of people got poor off of it. So, there was a transfer of net worth for some people.

INTERVIEWER: Did you see it as helpful in dealing with the sprawl question though?

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: Urban growth boundaries?

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: I mean that was one of the main objectives, I think, was to sort of --

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm. Was to control the sprawl and --

INTERVIEWER: -- have a line. You know, if it had enough land in it --

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: -- to allow for the market to work but beyond that would be resource land finality.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm. Uh --

INTERVIEWER: Farm and forest land.

GENE DERFLER: And I think that goal was accomplished. That was, for me, I think that probably was the most important part of --

INTERVIEWER: Right. That was a success.

GENE DERFLER: -- what you're trying to accomplish.

INTERVIEWER: And they're still trying to work out certain issues about certain types of uses allowed out there.

GENE DERFLER: Yep.

INTERVIEWER: Of course, we have the farm tax deferral program that --

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: -- you know, makes it easier for farmers, you know, agriculture people, to pay less in terms of taxes, not taxed on development value, because it's not going to likely happen, but on the agricultural value --

GENE DERFLER: Yes. That was the --

INTERVIEWER: -- you know, some people disagree with that but over all I think the taxing side has worked reasonably well.

GENE DERFLER: You couldn't keep farmland as farmland if you had a normal tax structure.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

GENE DERFLER: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Right. And, of course, that --

GENE DERFLER: I think one of the biggest complaints that, again, the legislators heard was there was so much land that was put aside for like forestland that wasn't forest land. It wasn't even useable for forestland. And --

INTERVIEWER: Forestland?

GENE DERFLER: Yeah. Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: Are we talking Eastern Oregon or Southern Oregon particularly?

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm. I think that it was kind of a --

INTERVIEWER: Not the valley so much.

GENE DERFLER: It was kind of a one plan -- it was kind of a one plan fits all.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

GENE DERFLER: And there was a lot of talk about dividing the state into two areas so that you didn't have that problem of overlap and that the lands that really are not useable for forestland wouldn't be considered as forestland. And I think that the -- as I recall the commission was very adamant about keeping it as kind of a one plan and I think that probably was something that was -- got a lot of criticism because it wasn't one system within, you know, the program.

INTERVIEWER: Well, county commissioners, of course, you know, were sort of caught, I think, between their --

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: -- some of their landowners who said we want to have more freedom and flexibility. Others saying, no, we don't want to have a lot of development out here and then the State was saying that we have to, you know, amend your plan to accommodate what was called, you know, the goals.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: And one of the goals was protecting forestland.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: And --

GENE DERFLER: It's really quite an accomplishment because I think a lot -- a lot of the cities and a lot of the county commissioners learned a lot of -- to object about when they -- when they had to make these plans. I think they were forced to do it.

INTERVIEWER: They were forced to do it because the old ways were often -- this is way before we had open meetings laws and so forth --

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: -- and, frankly, stuff was done behind, so-called, closed doors to make deals with people and --

GENE DERFLER: Yep.

INTERVIEWER: -- the public, interested owners and other interest groups, didn't have access to that. I mean there's a whole story that can be written about, you know, how decision-making was done by local governments.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: And we came along and said, you know, Goal 1, which was the citizen involvement goal, said these are the things you're going to have to do to adopt things and then, in what way you go about doing it and that sort of bugged some people.

GENE DERFLER: Well, it's really about how the government works. I think it's pretty miraculous that you got that thing through.

INTERVIEWER: Well, it took us a good 10 years before we had all the counties and the cities done.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: And I remember many meetings sitting there as staff and we would have LCDC members up, you know, in the room and before them would be say Josephine County commissioners, one or two of them or something like that, and the staff report would say this or that about what they submitted to us, and we would say, they didn't cut the mustard in terms of meeting what we were after.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: And some things had to go back and that, of course, was tough in --

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: -- many ways. And some of them were intentionally trying not to meet it and that's what we were there for.

GENE DERFLER: Sure. Well, when you have elected officials, they feel like they represent their people and --

INTERVIEWER: Right.

GENE DERFLER: -- what they say goes and they very much object to somebody like from the State coming in and saying you can't do it that way.

INTERVIEWER: That's why at the very beginning when we were developing the goals we had these area-wide meetings and we would ask people often in Baker County what do you think about what's important to protecting Oregon?

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: Not just in Baker County but what about the Columbia Gorge? What about the Willamette River Valley? What about the coast? And it caused them to sort of step back and think about the state as a whole and that's not easy to do.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: But on the other hand that's what we were asked to do by the legislature.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: And I guess we weren't trying to hide behind the legislator we were just saying this bill has passed and it was a successor to Senate Bill 10. You remember hearing

about that?

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: And had a lot of good ideas but there was no mechanism to assure everybody was going to follow the law.

GENE DERFLER: There was no teeth in it.

INTERVIEWER: Well, and it said something about the government. The governor was going to take over everything if you didn't do it right. Well, practically speaking, that was never going to happen.

GENE DERFLER: Yeah. It would never have been accomplished had it been presented that way. But I can remember the Gorge, the objections we had from people coming in and --

INTERVIEWER: Oh, yeah.

GENE DERFLER: -- talking about, uh --

INTERVIEWER: Sure.

GENE DERFLER: -- the controls that you're putting on. I can remember the Eastern Oregon people complaining about how their land was set up to be a forest and it never could be and you heard a lot about the fisherman on the coast. Each one of the areas had serious objections.

INTERVIEWER: And we had state agencies come in, I know, and they would testify to the commission about maybe what was going on in a certain county and they weren't representing the --

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: -- county per se, they were there representing the State of Oregon's interests.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: So, the poor commission, uh, was getting just -- you know, receiving all this input from pro-against and those who were for and so forth, and the staff would have its own report, and the local staff would talk and then when the AG's office would get in there would be legal issues raised and so it was quite a process. That's just one jurisdiction.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: You know, we would often have, you know, on a commission's agenda maybe five or ten cities and counties that day.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: And you could imagine it was a long day sometimes.

GENE DERFLER: A lot of conflicts.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Let's look at No. 5. Senate Bill 100 passed in 1973. It created a framework for land use planning in Oregon. In overseeing the land use program, describe the steps and actions with which you are familiar, that LCDC and DLCD took to ensure that every city and county's comprehensive plan, implementing ordinances, like zoning, fully comply with Senate Bill 100 and the statewide planning goals. Again, I understand, you weren't that close to it but that --

GENE DERFLER: You have to understand that in 1973, I was busy running a business.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

GENE DERFLER: I had no interest in politics. I had no interest in --

INTERVIEWER: Land use.

GENE DERFLER: -- land use --

INTERVIEWER: Except for your properties.

GENE DERFLER: Except that some of our properties did get down-zoned to the point

where were felt that we were losing money on it and --

INTERVIEWER: Um hmm.

GENE DERFLER: -- that was -- I was pretty much anti-government when I ran for the legislature and --

INTERVIEWER: But anti-government covers a lot of things.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: And you're not against certain things government does. Not --

GENE DERFLER: Right.

INTERVIEWER: Not, personally, talking to you, but I'm just saying people holding that philosophy saying we want to have as little government as we can --

GENE DERFLER: That's right.

INTERVIEWER: -- and wish to pay for.

GENE DERFLER: Yeah. If it's -- if it hurts you in the pocket book you're against it and if it helps you then you're all for it.

INTERVIEWER: And I think we sort of see that today even.

GENE DERFLER: Yeah. That doesn't change.

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

GENE DERFLER: So, I had no interest. I didn't even know when the legislature was in session.

INTERVIEWER: In the beginning?

GENE DERFLER: Yeah. I did come down and testify a couple times on a couple deals that -- because I was, you know, involved in a lot of the community and chamber of commerce and rotary clubs and this type of thing.

INTERVIEWER: I'd be curious in your caucus meetings, and later in the senate, when you were in a leadership position for sure, you must have had people come in -- members, of course, of the -- of a party and talk pro and con about what was or wasn't happening --

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: -- on the various fronts, but in terms of land use, you must have had some pretty warm discussions at times about this agency is way over the edge, we've got to do something to rein them in, I'm making this up, I don't know exactly, but you know what I'm saying, is that -- and others would say, no, I think there's some good points to be made and, of course, there was another party in the legislature, the urban or public side, and another side had some other views on that. So -- and you were in the presidency of the senate later on and you had to try to find ways to reconcile some of this, didn't you, in some ways or how did that -- I'm just curious in --

GENE DERFLER: I don't know if we ever reconciled anything in the caucus discussion.

INTERVIEWER: Well, each side worked together and then, of course, the governors were -- except for Governor Atiyeh, uh, all democrats --

GENE DERFLER: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: -- and you must have had leadership meetings with the Governor's office or him or her?

GENE DERFLER: We tried -- we were in charge -- uh, we were in control of bringing both sides in. You know, we -- I tried really hard to make -- as president, I felt as I was president of the senate, not of the republicans, uh, so --

INTERVIEWER: You wore two hats really. You were head of the caucus, I suppose.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: But you were also senate president, which is an interesting position to be in.

GENE DERFLER: You know, actually the majority leader sort of runs that caucus and the senate president sits in there and certainly is listened to but it's kind of the majority leader of each party that kind of sets the tone of what the caucus does.

INTERVIEWER: Would you sit in on democratic caucuses at times or not very often?

GENE DERFLER: Uh, when I first went in the legislature, the democrats had been in control like 30 years or something, and that was quite a -- quite an experience because as republicans in the minority they didn't let us do anything. When we took control, I think we tried to change that, and we tried to bring people together because both sides have good ideas.

INTERVIEWER: Sure.

GENE DERFLER: And I think we were fairly successful at that, trying to work together.

INTERVIEWER: I think the public, the voters generally, like to see people work things out. I mean if -- at extremes there are views --

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm. I think it's really unhealthy for the state when one party controls.

INTERVIEWER: Right. Right.

GENE DERFLER: Republic or democrat. There's no difference there. And I think right now what we have, democrats in charge of the cauc -- of legislature, governor, democrat, all the top offices are democrat, it's very unhealthy for the state, and I've noticed this last session it's kind of reverted back to we don't care what you think we're going to do what we want to do.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

GENE DERFLER: And I think that's unfortunate. It's not healthy for the state.

INTERVIEWER: Right. And I don't know how it's going to change up ahead. I mean it's --

GENE DERFLER: It's going to be very difficult to change. I think our -- our state is -- is changing and we're, you know, the -- the business community is not expressing their views like they should be doing, in my opinion. It's very difficult to get good candidates from the republican side to run because running for office is somewhat degrading. You have to go out and ask for money and it's not an easy process. I wish that we -- there's an awful lot of people that I wish would run because you need that balance. You need both sides. And right now it's pretty much one-sided.

INTERVIEWER: Well, this gun control issue, I don't want to get too far into that today, but it has been a real sore point for many of the republicans, I think.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: And not just republicans, I'm sure, but that's a -- there's even talk of recalls going out against certain legislators.

GENE DERFLER: Yeah. And that -- those are threats. I don't think that it will ever amount to anything but --

INTERVIEWER: Well, boy, I hope not. I really don't. I think it's -- but it's just the way things are at times. People get so worked up that they're -- they're going to resort to these drastic measures that develop, so --

GENE DERFLER: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Are there some things -- I'm looking at No. 7 on our list there but are there policies or issues that when overlooked by LCDC, that you can sort of think back a little bit, should we have done more in one way or another or something less or --

GENE DERFLER: If I had a complaint today about the system, I would say that the biggest complaint I would have would be the time it takes to get decisions made. I think when you have LUBA, and going through all these processes to get approved, is not good. You know, we used to run into the same thing at Workers' Comp. Every time you wanted to change something they wanted another six months to decide. Those decisions are made within a few minutes once they sit down and start working with it.

INTERVIEWER: Um hmm.

GENE DERFLER: And I think it's wrong when a group can hold up a plan that is good for the city or the state, for even three months, but a lot of them go on for three years.

INTERVIEWER: And you're talking appeals pretty much now days?

GENE DERFLER: Yeah. I think that those decisions aren't -- shouldn't take more than 30 days in my opinion.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

GENE DERFLER: Once the controversy is brought to head somebody is going to make up their mind very quickly, but yet these appeals processes take months, and sometimes years, and I think that's detrimental to the system.

INTERVIEWER: Of course, LUBA was created as a special land use court.

GENE DERFLER: I know they were.

INTERVIEWER: Board is a better use than court.

GENE DERFLER: But it still takes months and months.

INTERVIEWER: It takes time and money and --

GENE DERFLER: And it shouldn't.

INTERVIEWER: And that, of course, appeal -- people can appeal on what LUBA

rules.

GENE DERFLER: Well, if you want to make a correction in the system that's, in my opinion, where you need to make it. Make it so that the decision has to be made within 30 days.

INTERVIEWER: And then what would happen?

GENE DERFLER: Uh --

INTERVIEWER: It would stand or --

GENE DERFLER: I'm sure a decision should be made.

INTERVIEWER: A decision might be a negative action.

GENE DERFLER: Whatever it takes.

INTERVIEWER: Where somebody would say I'm going to appeal that and if it wasn't acted upon would it be reversed? I mean there's lot of little things in there but --

GENE DERFLER: Very possibly, but when somebody has plans made up, they've spent a lot of money in preparation to get these things done, and then it's sometimes two or three years before they can get it done.

INTERVIEWER: The terms that we would hear about are certainty, predictability and consistency.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: And we wanted those things as well and we felt that at least having things -- you've heard the term "clear and objective standards" So, a decision to approve or deny a certain request would be made on grounds that were pretty clear. I mean, you know, and --

GENE DERFLER: Okay.

INTERVIEWER: So, it wasn't -- it wasn't fudged up is what I'm trying to say.

GENE DERFLER: Okay.

INTERVIEWER: There would be reasons of rationale and they had to have the local government, if you wanted to call it that, the city or the county, they had to have a basis, a factual basis, and I'm not arguing that maybe it doesn't always work well, but I'm just saying that they try to make the decision-making process more objective. So, if I'm going to appeal that, I'm going to have to argue against facts and sometimes facts can get fuzzy, I realize that, but we're talking so many jurisdictions too.

GENE DERFLER: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: That's another thing too is that, you know, there's how many counties out there? Thirty-six? And then 242 cities?

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: Some of them tiny places and others are bigger and then, of course, there's Metro and Portland but, uh -- but the issue of timing is what you're getting at --

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: -- is you want to have some -- it's not just what the decision is going to be but you want to have certainty that it's going to be made one way or the other.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: And then you'd have to have some process where you could appeal that, and that's maybe where we get into lots of discussions as to what's the appellate ladder? Is it LUBA? You know? Supreme Court? Or, you know, all those questions and, uh --

GENE DERFLER: Well, it shouldn't take the time that it does to get to a decision and --

INTERVIEWER: Some things are major changes.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: Like if we're talking a particular zone decision where somebody

wants to do something in a zone and they're turned down then that should be pretty straight forward. Some planning decisions, local, are like a huge, you know, designation for a huge area, sort of like an urban growth boundary, either too big or too small.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: And you can imagine the number of parties that are affected by that. That's the other thing is that one has the right to participate?

GENE DERFLER: Who has standing?

INTERVIEWER: Standing. Correct. And I -- we're not going to solve this, you and I, today --

GENE DERFLER: No.

INTERVIEWER: -- but the thing is I look back now, is I wish we would have had more opportunity to not necessarily twist people in our direction as an agency, but to inform them as to how it was working.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: I mean, you had your staff, you had some of your lead people that would follow a particular subject, in this case -- what was his name, uh, our senator?

GENE DERFLER: Oh -- Chuck Norris?

INTERVIEWER: Nordstrom -- what was it, Norris?

GENE DERFLER: Norris.

INTERVIEWER: Norris. Excuse me. And he might help his fellow senators in understanding what was going on.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: But maybe more of that should have been done. Whether that would

have helped or not I don't know, you know?

GENE DERFLER: Well, my experience, I -- I remember when we did -- going through Workers' Comp, every time you -- and a lot of times the employer or the insurance company would just draw it out to where the employee had to do something and, you know, we started and instead of 180 days, we said 30 days.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

GENE DERFLER: And we brought those decisions down so they were done quickly, because the attorneys didn't look at it until the day before they were going to go to court.

INTERVIEWER: Um hmm. Right.

GENE DERFLER: And you had 180 days of nothing. And I think you'd find the same thing in land use that there's -- if it's not expedited, it's drawn out, and there's a lot of cases where people take advantage of the system and wait until the last day to make the appeal.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

GENE DERFLER: And they purposely do it to drag out the time.

INTERVIEWER: So, you're -- if you could snap your fingers and look back in time you would have changed the process?

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: The process -- you're not necessarily arguing agriculture versus housing or something, you're just saying that a decision made ought to, if it's going to be appealed, had a certain timeline to be appealed within that, and then they have to make a decision, you know, and then what's the appellate ladder then after that, so at least you know that.

GENE DERFLER: Well, not to be anything that went more than 90 days. Right?

INTERVIEWER: Yep. And I'd like to think that a lot of things did work right.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: I mean I'm not -- you and I aren't arguing the system, we're just saying that, you know, there might have been ways to expedite things.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: But, you know, if you think about it, how many decisions are made with all these communities and all these landowners and so forth? A lot of things went through a lot better than they ever used to.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: I don't have any facts and figures to substantiate this. I'm just saying that, yes, there were some real head banging arguments and -- and you would -- a lot of things went through pretty well and --

GENE DERFLER: We ran into the same problem in the city getting plans approved.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

GENE DERFLER: And they have done a much better job now --

INTERVIEWER: City of Salem?

GENE DERFLER: Yes, of getting a plan through, not delaying it for a person, and I just think, from my viewpoint, if you're going to make any kind of a correction to the present day system that would be it.

INTERVIEWER: This might be something that this -- this discussion is maybe going to, you know, produce some interesting results and --

GENE DERFLER: Could be.

INTERVIEWER: -- we'd be happy to -- I'm not in charge any -- any more here but --

GENE DERFLER: Nor am I.

INTERVIEWER: -- no, but it would be easy to put a meeting together --

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: -- you know, with some folks and, of course, you had legal counsel for the legislature --

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: -- and, of course, we rely principally upon our attorney general's office and --

GENE DERFLER: And they're risk adverse. My experience with them is if there's any question they say no. They don't even want to work in the gray areas. I think that, uh --

INTERVIEWER: We should have a beer sometime after all this. (Chuckling)

GENE DERFLER: (Chuckling)

INTERVIEWER: Let's look at No. 8 for a second here.

GENE DERFLER: Okay.

INTERVIEWER: Back in '74, they were just trying to get these goals, the first 14 goals put out.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: And we weren't having a lot of success, and so the agency went out with the commission and held meetings around the -- that this thing is getting at here in terms of, you know, outreach.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: Public involvement. Not necessarily saying what do you want, one way or the other but, you know, what's important to you, what should the -- you know, all these broad questions and now here we are over 40 years later, hard to believe, I think a lot of people

have -- don't know much about the land use system in Oregon and I'm not trying to be unhappy or unfaith -- you know, critical, I'm just saying they just don't know, maybe they accept everything is fine, but if we were to create -- and I say "we", the State, to go out and do that again, what would you suggest would be effective, you know, uh, in terms of the outreach is what I'm getting at as -- as you say --

GENE DERFLER: Well, uh --

INTERVIEWER: -- what -- what are effective ways to bring in people's views and get their issues addressed and what -- we're not trying to argue about a particular thing but just in general.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: That's what this question is getting at.

GENE DERFLER: There's an awful lot of apathy --

INTERVIEWER: Apathy.

GENE DERFLER: -- and unless it affects you individually you're not going to find a lot of interest. It's only when your ox is being gored that you become interested in learning about it. It's very difficult in today's world because there's so much going on and there's so much information --

INTERVIEWER: Right.

GENE DERFLER: -- it's difficult to get people interested in any particular subject like you're talking about.

INTERVIEWER: They tell us, and I'm not close to it really anymore, but in the next 10-15 years another million people, or something like that, are coming to Oregon or -- a huge number.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: The population is going to grow.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: And how do we deal with those issues, for example, in the econ -- economy issues and the transportation issues and -- and behind all that is, well, you need to know what the process is.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: And so, uh, we're not trying to preach to people, we can't force them to come in, but you know, young people are -- you know, I'm not one of them anymore, I guess, but computers and stuff and the way things are communicated and so forth --

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: -- but how do we bring in people and educate them, inform is a better word than educate, but -- and you say they don't have an interest unless their particular property or a particular thing is going to either be something they want or don't want --

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: -- but how do we get in a broader sense than that? Is there a -- are there -- are there some answers and suggestions that people can give us to -- to do that and -- and here you are, you're a -- an Oregonian of many years now and you can look back over your shoulder and see how a lot of things were done and were not done.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: And now you're able to sit here and look ahead and what are some thoughts that you might have and maybe some of your fellow ex-legislators might have for us, for the State, to -- to do this again and -- or should that -- that not be done at all? I don't know. I'm

just throwing that out. That's what No. 8 is after is are there some techniques or some ideas about how to break through --

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: -- to get people's attention.

GENE DERFLER: Well, my experience in the legislature and being around government is if you find a program that works, like we did a lot of work with children, how do you -- how do you help kids, you know, have better lives, and when you start looking around the state you find some very successful programs. Like Eugene has one that was started by two ladies. We've kind of followed that in Building Blocks here in Salem. It's very difficult to transfer that program that these two ladies started and had got the -- the energy started within the Eugene area and it's been very successful on getting businesses to help and provide more volunteers, because those two ladies are the ones that did it. You can't transfer that to Salem or to --

INTERVIEWER: Right.

GENE DERFLER: -- Albany, but each community, uh, has some leadership that will take an interest in a subject, and take off and make it work, and I think it -- it's, uh -- it has to be done by individuals who have a desire to make a change.

INTERVIEWER: Do legislators have a role here? State legislators?

GENE DERFLER: I found that legislators really don't want to do much. They just want to be there and it's very difficult to get them energized to -- to want to make change. They just don't want to rock the boat. Just, you know, don't bother us. But if you bring something to them that will help them get re-elected, yeah, they're going to be good to it.

INTERVIEWER: Um hmm.

GENE DERFLER: And so it takes a certain amount -- it takes certain people. Like I

don't know, the Boys & Girls Club here in Salem is very active. It's not active in every city but there was a group of business people, and Larry Tokarski was the one that instigated it and got people engaged in it, and we built clubs and I -- it's been a pretty successful program because of one or two individuals that made it happen.

INTERVIEWER: Um hmm.

GENE DERFLER: And that's the way you make -- I think you make changes and --

INTERVIEWER: So, we have to find those people in various communities and --

GENE DERFLER: It takes their leadership. Somebody that has the energy --

INTERVIEWER: -- do -- do legislators often know who those people are or -- or not, I wonder? It varies, I suppose.

GENE DERFLER: No, I -- I think that individuals find something in their own life that they want to make a change for, and they get involved in it, and they get caught up in it and they become successful in it and --

INTERVIEWER: Um hmm.

GENE DERFLER: -- they just further it and when those people go away the programs go away.

INTERVIEWER: Yep.

GENE DERFLER: It's individuals like, uh -- for me like I was on the board for the YMCA, and we had to, uh -- a person there that ran that and he got the whole community involved at the YMCA.

INTERVIEWER: Who was that?

GENE DERFLER: John Moskawi.

INTERVIEWER: I know the name. I don't know him personally.

GENE DERFLER: Yeah. When John finally retired and left, the whole thing sort of collapsed. So, it -- it's -- it's the individual that really -- in leadership that takes hold of some idea and makes it happen.

INTERVIEWER: So, what we ought to do is try to educate our leaders more but that's easier said than done. Right?

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm. Because they're really busy too.

INTERVIEWER: They're busy with every day things, budget and public works issues and highways and whatever else.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

GENE DERFLER: And like yourself, you were -- you were involved in one issue --

INTERVIEWER: Yep.

GENE DERFLER: -- and you dedicated your entire focus to that one issue.

INTERVIEWER: It was. Right. Right.

GENE DERFLER: And that's what happens with -- with Building Blocks. Sue Miller took hold of that. She got the idea out of Eugene. She took hold of it and now we have, what, four Building Blocks around this area, doing a terrific job, and she's gotten a lot of people involved.

INTERVIEWER: Sue Miller you're talking about?

GENE DERFLER: Yeah. Um hmm. But without her that would never have happened.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

GENE DERFLER: And I found that throughout the state where you have a successful program, you can't move that program to another city, uh, but you -- you find people doing

something else that maybe is just as good.

INTERVIEWER: If you look ahead to the future are there some issues that have a land use aspect to them that you see out there that ought to be thought about or dealt with? I mean, uh, water issues are out there, I guess, is one and --

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm. Water is going to be a big thing.

INTERVIEWER: -- I think climate change. I know people argue about climate change but I think --

GENE DERFLER: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: -- we're going to see some things happening in that whole area.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: You know transportation issues. You know, they're very expensive to do and, uh -- but do you see yourself, you know, looking ahead, you know, what if a young legislator came to you, or somebody interested in running for office, said I'm going to be in district so and so but what else in the state of Oregon should we be thinking about and --

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: -- and I don't know whether there's any kind of a method or process to --

GENE DERFLER: Yeah. I found that -- I found myself -- I could concentrate on maybe three issues in a session.

INTERVIEWER: Three issues.

GENE DERFLER: And just concentrate on those, like electrical de-regulation or -- or, uh--

INTERVIEWER: Of course, the budget's always the centerpiece issue too isn't it?

GENE DERFLER: The individual legislator doesn't have a lot to say about that.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Right.

GENE DERFLER: There's two people in Ways and Means --

INTERVIEWER: Ways and Means.

GENE DERFLER: -- that does that and -- even though they have a large committee its two people that make the decisions.

INTERVIEWER: Um hmm.

GENE DERFLER: And you have input into it and you could ask for funding for a particular program or something like that, but you can't make the decision.

INTERVIEWER: Um hmm.

GENE DERFLER: And so I think that -- I used to try to get the legislator -- I used to know the committee members to say, speaking of such, what do you want to accomplish? And most of them would say, well, what do you want us to accomplish? And I said my job is to get your agenda through the process, but not many of them would choose a subject and make it happen and I found that kind of unfortunate in the legislature.

INTERVIEWER: Hmm.

GENE DERFLER: Did senior legislators or senior senators, for example, try to help rookies, so to speak, coming in or not?

GENE DERFLER: I think they -- they made an effort but if you're -- most of the senior legislators probably are the ones that produced the least in the --

INTERVIEWER: Really?

GENE DERFLER: Yeah. They're not really trying to get anything done. They're just sort of being there and I think it's unfortunate because you should have legislators that want to get

things done.

INTERVIEWER: We would think that we voted for them to get things done.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm. But their main concern was -- I always said that in the legislator any bill that comes through goes through a filter. The first filter it goes through is how does it affect our control of the legislature? The second thing you consider is how does it affect my re-election? And the third thing is what does it do for the people? And it goes through that filter before anything ever gets done. And, again, most of the legislators are more concerned about can I get re-elected rather than is this the right way to vote.

INTERVIEWER: But it doesn't sound like it's a job that many of them really enjoy that much do they? Or -- or some do, I guess, but -- enjoy isn't the right word but they don't feel like --

GENE DERFLER: Well, it -- there's a certain amount of prestige, I guess, if -- in being there.

INTERVIEWER: I guess.

GENE DERFLER: And that shouldn't be a reason to be there.

INTERVIEWER: No. You're there to get something done and --

GENE DERFLER: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: -- there's a lot of problems that need to get solved and -- and you need to get people in there that have an intense interest in getting that done. Just like yourself. You concentrated on one item, and -- and it -- it's a -- I look at what -- what you did, or what the LCDC did, and it takes someone like that to really make things happen in the system.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

GENE DERFLER: And you've got to be focused and you've got to not stop.

INTERVIEWER: And, of course, you have a lot of interest groups around there too.

That's the other upside.

GENE DERFLER: Absolutely. Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: You know, it's not just, you know, you and the agencies and the Governor's office. It's -- this is, you know, interest groups, either pro or con, on your particular issue.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: And, uh, they were relentless. And then there's all these -- the League of Oregon Cities and the Association of Counties. So, they're represented and, you know, there's just on and on and on.

GENE DERFLER: They're all special interest groups.

INTERVIEWER: And, uh, it's -- it's hard to -- to steer a course, you know, unless you really have a very, very fixed idea of what you want to accomplish.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: And it may not be one that somebody else wants to support but, uh --

GENE DERFLER: The other thing I found in the legislation you have to accept less than what you want.

INTERVIEWER: Less than what you want?

GENE DERFLER: If you want -- if you want to go from A to D, I always just say you go from A to C and give back the D if you --

INTERVIEWER: It's called compromise?

GENE DERFLER: Yep.

INTERVIEWER: Or collaborate.

GENE DERFLER: You can't get everything.

INTERVIEWER: You never will be able to right?

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm. You have to be able to get the important things done.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think -- and I'm looking on Page 3 there, I think, or -- or No. 11, uh, do you think the bill, Senate Bill 100, would pass today if we were to --

GENE DERFLER: Uh --

INTERVIEWER: It's hard to imagine where we would be but, you know --

GENE DERFLER: Only if you had another MacPherson or Hallick --

INTERVIEWER: Tom McCall and so forth?

GENE DERFLER: -- McCall. Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: So, almost a flag bearer or --

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm. You have to have --

INTERVIEWER: -- a post but they -- they could fight for something and -- and --

GENE DERFLER: And as you find -- I found it takes at least three sessions, sometimes four, to get -- get it completed. You can't get it in two years.

INTERVIEWER: Right. Right.

GENE DERFLER: So, it takes somebody that is really dedicated. I think anybody that's really dedicated, and has a good program, probably could get it through the legislature.

INTERVIEWER: I think underneath that question is the old, uh, challenge of trying to balance or find a common ground between local interests, local control if you want to call it that --

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: -- and State interest -- State -- State control and we --

GENE DERFLER: Again, you're not going to get everything you want.

INTERVIEWER: Well, I remember reading in some of my research on this was that

L.B. Day, you remember the name, of course, was brought in to work in sort of a -- an ex-official capacity during the legislative session --

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: -- in '73 and --

GENE DERFLER: I knew L.B. real well.

INTERVIEWER: -- and he said to people we've got to find a way where we can plan from the bottom up.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: Not the top down.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: And L.B. had a way, as you know, and I was in many meetings with him, not personally one-on-one, but, you know, in the sessions and he laid it out there what he wanted and how he wanted to do it, but --

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: -- he said that if you want this to succeed you're going to have to find some middle ground and one of them was going to local government and saying, it's your plan, in order to -- it's your decisions, yes, there's going to be State requirements to address but how do you put that altogether is your -- your decision.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: And I think that a lot of people were quite surprised at that and found themselves caught between, you know, doing what the -- the guy down on the corner wanted to have done versus what the State was saying in terms of what you had to do.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: And, uh -- that, I think, is still the challenge.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: And we have it at the national level, and some states don't like the way family planning is usually dealt with, or gun control, and others are saying we want to do it our own way or -- and now in that order that we've, I think, dealt with the issue in terms of land use reasonably well.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm. Yes.

INTERVIEWER: A decade and -- not a decade, but more decades have passed now, but, you know, there's issues out there coming, you know, like seismic questions, and --

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm. Things are always changing.

INTERVIEWER: Things are changing.

GENE DERFLER: We're getting more population and I --

INTERVIEWER: And Oregon's economy. We haven't talked about the economy very much and -- and I'm talking about the state economy but, you know, uh, forestry was -- used to be what, number one or number two, and then ag was in there, and tourism is still pretty high up for us.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm. It doesn't help the economy a lot though because the wages are low.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. That's a whole other thing. They're driving at the minimum wage raise and a lot of business owners are saying, no, we don't want to give any more money to people and we won't go into that today, but it --

GENE DERFLER: Yeah. I -- I have my own opinion on that and --

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. And that's fine. It's just that, you know, we have so many of

these issues and how do you find the -- the right course to follow? And I guess that's what I'm trying to get at is that.

GENE DERFLER: I think when you get the opinionated people, they're pretty firm on what they believe, but some place in the middle is usually pretty probably the worse you'd end up.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. So, I think we have a -- a reasonably good balance but some people would still argue against that --

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: -- and say, no, we want to do it our own way and I think that decision's been made. You can't just thumb your nose and --

GENE DERFLER: It gets back to what I said before is that you, a person that has the burning desire to do something, and he gradually gets people around him and makes it happen.

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

GENE DERFLER: The State of Oregon got together, and through that kind of a leadership program, and created LCDC.

INTERVIEWER: I think there was also the time when the word "environment" was brand new for many people and all of a sudden --

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: -- then Governor McCall, you know, uh, firmly believed and enjoyed things to get Oregon's values and resources protected and --

GENE DERFLER: I can remember the first job I had when I got out of high school working in the woods.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

GENE DERFLER: I can remember walking through the forest, where you had mile after

mile of huge great big Douglas Fir trees, and we would go through there and decimate it.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

GENE DERFLER: It didn't -- we didn't do any of the cleanup. We just took the logs out and left it. Today you can't do that. You have to clean it up and replant it and --

INTERVIEWER: Forest practices.

GENE DERFLER: -- whoever thought we'd run out of timber in those years.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

GENE DERFLER: But we did.

INTERVIEWER: Well, and the way it was done and the way --

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: The waste that was there and just a lot of things.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm. We wasted a lot of natural resources that way.

INTERVIEWER: Well, that's a whole other discussion about that and --

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: -- the federal government gets involved with that because they're involved, quote/unquote "half with Oregon" looking over that -- over half.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm. About 52 percent.

INTERVIEWER: Fifty-two percent. Right.

GENE DERFLER: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So -- and those are tough issues out there.

GENE DERFLER: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: They really are.

GENE DERFLER: I see now that -- I was reading about the Spotted owl, how they've

continued to decrease in numbers, but the reason is because the Barred owl, who is the enemy of the spotted owl, is the one that's causing the problems.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. They're trying to work out a compromise, if you can use that word, about the sage grouse too over in Eastern Oregon.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And before -- they want to avoid having it listed.

GENE DERFLER: Oh, yeah. Because it would be --

INTERVIEWER: So, they're trying to find a way to deal with the habitat questions and I don't know anything about it at all but I just know that it's a hot issue.

GENE DERFLER: I don't either but I know that it really hurt the farming areas.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Right. Right. So --

GENE DERFLER: Sometimes it's overkill on some of that stuff, I think, but --

INTERVIEWER: In his early remarks, Governor McCall would talk about livability.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: And that's one of the things on Page 3, number one there, right at the top of your page there, that, uh -- it's a term we don't hear too much anymore, but it was a big term that was --

GENE DERFLER: Sustainability is the big thing.

INTERVIEWER: -- sustainability. Is that what livability means? And, you know, it could go either way.

GENE DERFLER: It could mean different things to different people.

INTERVIEWER: Different things to different people and how do we get some consensus, if that's the right word, around a -- a definition of what -- what that --

GENE DERFLER: I'd say that 80 percent of the people have no interest in the subject and the 20 percent are the ones that --

INTERVIEWER: A lot of people in Oregon love Oregon for its beauty and a lot of its natural values and so forth --

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: -- but they also have very strong feelings about, you know, not being told what to do.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: That's not unique to Oregon by the way is it?

GENE DERFLER: (Chuckling)

INTERVIEWER: But uh --

GENE DERFLER: Well, I think like the timber industry, I think you can't just grow timber and never harvest it.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

GENE DERFLER: I mean it's crazy but that's what a lot of the environmentalists want to do. They don't want to cut any tree and --

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

GENE DERFLER: -- that's the -- on the far end that way.

INTERVIEWER: The far over, yeah.

GENE DERFLER: And you have the other one that wants to take it all.

INTERVIEWER: Take it all.

GENE DERFLER: Sure.

INTERVIEWER: And so how do we strike that balance and so maybe the term balance

is the word we're looking for but, boy, how do you build a political consensus that will stay fixed for a while?

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: You know, that's the thing that's hard is to get people to, you know, agree to disagree on certain things but overall work it out and that's a -- I think a great challenge for our political leaders these days is to -- to lean in ways that doesn't just offend and --

GENE DERFLER: And what's balanced for you may not be balanced for me.

INTERVIEWER: Well, and -- and you know you're going to get into some of those cases like that and so --

GENE DERFLER: Just like here again in the legislature and the funding, uh, the -- the last arguments that are the most difficult to swallow is usually over a two or three million dollar project or a -- the 99 percent is already done.

INTERVIEWER: Um hmm.

GENE DERFLER: And yet you fight over that small area that probably doesn't make a lot of difference but it's important to certain people.

INTERVIEWER: Right. Right. And how do we find leaders who can sort of I don't want to say unify but be able to get ahold of an issue and -- and lead in a way that we already, more of less, follow behind and that's what is --

GENE DERFLER: It's very difficult.

INTERVIEWER: Huh?

GENE DERFLER: It's very difficult.

INTERVIEWER: And we see that at the national level too about, you know, all these people want to be President and -- but they all have different views and whether you're on one

party or the other but, gosh, you know, they --

GENE DERFLER: Right. They spend most of their time back there trying to destroy each other. It just was crazy.

INTERVIEWER: Well -- yeah, and --

GENE DERFLER: And one party is not much better than the other. I mean it's --

INTERVIEWER: But it is what we have isn't it in our system?

GENE DERFLER: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: I think of Oregon differently though.

GENE DERFLER: I think somehow they have to get ahold of the -- the election process.

INTERVIEWER: The election process?

GENE DERFLER: Yeah. I think that there's too much money involved and too many people benefitting. We have, what, how many lobbyists compared to legislators? I mean there's thousands of them.

INTERVIEWER: We have 90 legislators and --

GENE DERFLER: There's all these people spending money like --

INTERVIEWER: -- they're not -- they're on one side or the other, you know, and so you have -- whether it's guns or whether it's education or whether it's water or -- and I'm not saying it's easy for legislators to sort all that out --

GENE DERFLER: No.

INTERVIEWER: -- and that's where you come back to your point is you get people who are willing to invest time and effort into one or two issues.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: And then they become the people that other people in the legislative

branch, via the house or the senate, are going to them for their direction.

GENE DERFLER: You can get things done in the legislature, it takes a long time, and the changes are small, but if -- but if you concentrate on it and build a following you can get things done that you didn't think you could.

INTERVIEWER: Um hmm.

GENE DERFLER: But it doesn't -- it doesn't happen in one or two sessions. It takes somebody that's dedicated to do it for --

INTERVIEWER: If you look back now, through your legislative experience and your work, private sector, experience, you know, and how are we doing in Oregon overall? I'm going to ask you to just step back and look at the big picture overall. Are we to be patted on our backs for the things we've gotten done in our state and I'm talking to -- I'm not trying to say we're in a race with anybody else.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: I'm just saying that the quality of life, maybe livability is another term, here in Oregon is it better, the same, or worse, or -- I mean how do you look at that?

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: You know? I'm just asking you from --

GENE DERFLER: From a personal standpoint?

INTERVIEWER: Of course.

GENE DERFLER: Yeah. Well, I'm -- I really -- I'm greatly concerned about our country the way it's --

INTERVIEWER: Country?

GENE DERFLER: The county and the state the way its going.

INTERVIEWER: And our state?

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm. I think that we have too many people that are wanting to say what can you do for me instead of what can I do for you.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

GENE DERFLER: I don't think that --

INTERVIEWER: Is education a big key here too?

GENE DERFLER: Education is a real problem.

INTERVIEWER: I mean, I think it -- you know, some kids hardly get out of high school, and then there's other kids that are, you know, straight A students and go off and --

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm. I think that's up -- 25 percent of students probably are getting the best education they've ever had in Oregon, but I think the lower half is a lot less being educated.

INTERVIEWER: And so they're going to go for the blue collar -- collar workers?

GENE DERFLER: Even at that, there's many of them that are not going to be able to get a job at all because of -- you know, and we no longer -- it used to be that when you graduated from school you could go to work in the woods or you could get a job in a factory and you put the same screw in the same hole and it would be a good salary. Today those jobs are gone. There aren't any. You have to be -- you have to be able to produce something of value. Too many of the kids graduating they don't have a good grounding in math or English.

INTERVIEWER: Is that the -- well, we can talk about education until we're blue in the face, I suppose --

GENE DERFLER: Yes, you can.

INTERVIEWER: -- in terms of both the problems and the -- and the possible solutions

and, of course, the cost of education --

GENE DERFLER: Is skyrocketing.

INTERVIEWER: -- is skyrocketing. And, of course, if you're talking going to college, uh, gosh, just over here at Willamette, that's a private school, but we're talking what --

GENE DERFLER: Forty thousand a year.

INTERVIEWER: -- \$40,000 a year. That's \$160,000 for a BA degree.

GENE DERFLER: Well, 85 percent of the cost of education is salaries.

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

GENE DERFLER: So, if you're going to adjust anything it's --

INTERVIEWER: And we want to get good teachers obviously.

GENE DERFLER: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: And we want to have, uh -- so it's -- I'm just back to my thing about how do we get people to take time to look at the land use stuff, you know, because land use isn't just regulation. There's got to be other ways to deal with what we want to accomplish --

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: -- through non-regulatory means, which doesn't mean we're going to, you know, back away but are there other ways we can, you know, find solutions and that's hard to do, no question about it, but it's -- it's going to be a combination of a package of things. There's regulations, of course, but there's also other ways, maybe like agreements and so forth, and, uh -- but --

GENE DERFLER: I think most people want the same thing.

INTERVIEWER: Yes. That's a good point.

GENE DERFLER: But how do you get there? That's the --

INTERVIEWER: How do you get there and, you know, it's -- where am I living and how can I do -- you know, do I have a job that's secure? Do I have a job that's secure? Do I have a retirement that's, you know, amassing a nice sum (unintelligible).

GENE DERFLER: Having gone -- gone through -- I grew up, of course -- I was born in '24, so I grew up right in the heart of the depression --

INTERVIEWER: Right.

GENE DERFLER: -- when no one had anything and we were able to survive. I'm not sure people could survive today because we didn't have -- they started the WPA because people wouldn't take welfare.

INTERVIEWER: Yep.

GENE DERFLER: Today it's not a -- there's nothing wrong with taking money that you didn't earn.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. And it's -- it's sort of a -- a vicious circle because if you don't have anything to live off of, you know, you're not going to go very far.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: So, you've got to have something but then the --

GENE DERFLER: But everybody has -- they have an opportunity to get a good education if they choose to do it.

INTERVIEWER: But if you come from a household that isn't supportive? You know what I mean?

GENE DERFLER: Okay.

INTERVIEWER: I'm going to -- I'm not arguing with you, obviously. We're not arguing at all, but it's just -- it's a complicated set of issues and --

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: -- be it land use, or be it education, or Workmens' Comp and so forth, and a lot of people aren't getting the kind of information they need and -- and, of course, you throw health care in there --

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: -- in the mix.

GENE DERFLER: Those people that don't take care of themselves and yet people that do have to pay for the ones that don't.

INTERVIEWER: Well, I guess that's always been that way to some extent.

GENE DERFLER: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: You're right but we have to just sort of step back and look at the big picture and what is the big picture, you know? Are we doing okay or not? And, of course, this subject is about our land use program and what has it meant for Oregon. I think a lot of good things.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: Of course, from my side of the table, that's -- I guess you could say that.

GENE DERFLER: Well, it depends. You could say are we doing good or we're probably -- but compared to the rest of the world our country is still doing a great job.

INTERVIEWER: That's a whole -- we haven't even talked -- we're not going to talk about foreign policy today but --

GENE DERFLER: I know but I'm saying --

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. You're right. And, uh --

GENE DERFLER: It depends on what you compare it to.

INTERVIEWER: That's right. And so --

GENE DERFLER: We're all certainly living a lot better today than we ever have.

INTERVIEWER: Right. Right. And, uh, how do we get other people to realize that and take advantage of the opportunities that -- that they do have out there. So --

GENE DERFLER: Yeah. Well, I think that actually life has been pretty easy for most of us.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Unless you've had major crisis like a, you know, a sick mother or father or a death or something like that or --

GENE DERFLER: A lot of people have had (unintelligible).

INTERVIEWER: Just -- yes.

GENE DERFLER: I certainly have been fortunate. I never expected to --

INTERVIEWER: But you've worked all your life?

GENE DERFLER: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. And you're still working as a volunteer?

GENE DERFLER: Yes. I worked until I was 81.

INTERVIEWER: Well --

GENE DERFLER: So, that's --

INTERVIEWER: That's pretty -- pretty remarkable.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: You know, and -- how do we get people to look at work as something that you might like.

GENE DERFLER: I think you have to do -- you have to do production of something.

INTERVIEWER: And you want to give back. I mean that's -- that's one of the motives I have --

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: -- is whether it's doing something like this or volunteering at the Red Cross or serving at blood drives and it's --

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: You know, I've had a lot of success and -- and I'm comfortable economically. We're not out-and-out rich and so forth but we're able to --

GENE DERFLER: We are compared to the world.

INTERVIEWER: Yes. But, you know, I want to be able to use the time I have left to help others, you know, in --

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: -- ways that are both beneficial to others but also satisfying to me.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: So this project is interesting because it engages my career but also the future.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: And that's a pretty neat deal here. If we can get people to come in and talk to us about here's what I think should be done and not done, you're not part of the table, but I'm saying, you know --

GENE DERFLER: No.

INTERVIEWER: You know what I'm saying? Is that how do we -- how do we move ahead and are there threats out there we need to participate in?

GENE DERFLER: Well, we are moving ahead but sometimes not --

INTERVIEWER: Not very fast or in the wrong direction --

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: -- or --

GENE DERFLER: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And -- so what else should we talk about? We're almost out of time here and there's other topics that we could get into on this, page three and four. Some of them we've already been over, I think --

GENE DERFLER: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: -- pretty much and, uh, you know, like question seven on page four, how do we make the program more equitable, fair and politically stable? I see all those words down there because I came across them but if you had answers to all of those then people could more or less be satisfied with we'd be in pretty good shape.

GENE DERFLER: Well, you'd have to give me a definition of equitable, fair and politically stable.

INTERVIEWER: Well, equitable, you know, is like if you're going to get treated fairly and maybe if you're, you know, financially, you know --

GENE DERFLER: But if I lose the appeal I didn't get treated fairly?

INTERVIEWER: Well, yeah, you can argue that point too, of course, is that maybe your attorney didn't see it the way you wanted him to or something but --

GENE DERFLER: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: -- and then, uh -- but I think Oregon's process for making decisions, at least in terms of land use, is -- and maybe other areas as well, is on the whole, I think, pretty

good.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: You know, is it fast? Is it quick? Certainly in the criminal area we know it takes years sometimes.

GENE DERFLER: Well, you have certain rules in land use and people know what the rules are.

INTERVIEWER: If you know what they are and if you can play by them, uh, and you make a good case, --

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: -- being told yes or no will come a lot better than if you just sort of sit back and wait for it, you know, and, uh -- and this --

GENE DERFLER: Not knowing the rules can get you in trouble.

INTERVIEWER: Sure. And that's -- that's true of life in many ways. Right?

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: And some people try to take shortcuts in life and that's where they get into real trouble.

GENE DERFLER: But I -- I don't know how you get people interested in it if it's not affecting them. They're --

INTERVIEWER: Well, there's a lot of people who love Oregon --

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: -- in a broad sense.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: And so the question is on one hand we have all of Oregon's great

values and beauty and so forth, and on the other hand we have some potential threats coming.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: More people. I'm not saying it's a bad thing. It's just more people are coming. We have worries about seismic safety. There is the issue of climate change. There's stuff involving the issue of oceans. There's lots of things that are out there but how do we get those things connected in some way and, uh --

GENE DERFLER: Well, you're never going to reach perfection.

INTERVIEWER: You won't reach perfection and so we have to sort of drop down a little bit and say what is our plan? I mean there's the word "plan", we haven't used that much this afternoon, but does the State have a plan for doing certain things and -- and if it doesn't --

GENE DERFLER: Well, if you -- if you can describe where you want to end up.

INTERVIEWER: Well, and that's where you have to get leaders, political leaders, frankly, who can come together and say we have a consensus --

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: -- about what we're trying to achieve.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: Now the means to get there that's where the -- and you get -- that's what gets us into the messy details and how you're going to, you know, accomplish something.

GENE DERFLER: Yeah. I don't know that I want to get like Europe where you have to go through a committee to paint your house a different color or --

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. We're not that far yet.

GENE DERFLER: No, I know, but as you get more people that's the tendency is for more control.

INTERVIEWER: Well, yeah. I guess that's possible but Oregon's a big state.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: You know, it's 96,000 square miles. Half of that's federal.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: And so we've got -- what's that about 45,000 miles or so of private land in square miles. How do we accommodate, you know, and to do it in a -- in an orderly manner and have plans to say how we're going to accomplish certain things. People will buy into that. Now, whether they're educated about that?

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. What's the message and who's going to do it and how do you, and our leaders, have to be more or less together on these things. If they're not then we're not going to get anywhere --

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: -- in my opinion. And here I am talking. You should be doing more talking than I am but --

GENE DERFLER: Not.

INTERVIEWER: -- you know what I'm saying is that there's just a lot of questions out there. And our young people, what are they being told about how to be good citizens for Oregon in the future. That's a whole other discussion, I realize, but --

GENE DERFLER: Yeah. It sort of like history. They don't teach history any more. You ask a kid, you know, where Peru is located in South America. They go where's South America and probably couldn't even point it out in a lot of cases. And so there is so much more information that you'd pick up.

INTERVIEWER: There's so much out there too though.

GENE DERFLER: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: If you want to know where is Peru, you go to your computer and type in Peru and you'll get that much stuff --

GENE DERFLER: That's right.

INTERVIEWER: -- about that country or, uh, how do you build a good land use plan? Well, there's a lot of information there, there in books and so forth.

GENE DERFLER: Yep.

INTERVIEWER: How do you, you know, Workmens' Comp if you're interested in that, if you -- uh, there's no absence of information.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: So, one of the big things we're -- we're sort of coming up against is there's lots of information out there --

GENE DERFLER: I -- I often look at television and think what a great education you could receive if -- if they put on programs that were educating rather than the --

INTERVIEWER: Well, we watch PBS. You must watch PBS?

GENE DERFLER: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And I watch, pretty religiously, the news program at 7 o'clock and they freely admit that they're not covering everything.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: But they go into depth, be it, whether it's an overseas issue or a local issue.

GENE DERFLER: There's information -- there's information available but how do you

get people interested in learning about it? They'd rather watch a football game or a --

INTERVIEWER: Basketball game.

GENE DERFLER: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: I watched a game last night, of course, that's --

GENE DERFLER: Or watch a sitcom, uh --

INTERVIEWER: And movies and so forth and, uh -- so we're talking society aren't we?

GENE DERFLER: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And here -- you know, you're at the -- near the end of your life and I'm not far away from you in some respects --

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: -- and there's lots of people in -- in my generation that are, you know, baby boomers that are now in their early 60's or mid-60's and early 70's and, uh, is this all there is, as the old expression goes? Is there more than we can do and should be doing? But that doesn't say that there are thousands of person hours out there that are being donated by volunteers, be it education, health care, blood drives, schools, parks, you know, there's just a whole host of folks that are out there doing, you know, a lot. So, we shouldn't forget that that's also there too --

GENE DERFLER: Just like the younger generations. There are an awful lot of good kids out there.

INTERVIEWER: There are and -- and --

GENE DERFLER: And doing --

INTERVIEWER: -- and you don't want to paint everything as black as it can be if there's a lot of good things out there --

GENE DERFLER: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: -- how do we get that focused?

GENE DERFLER: How do you grow that group?

INTERVIEWER: Right. And -- that's right and those are hard decisions to make.

GENE DERFLER: Right.

INTERVIEWER: But I think there's a lot of satisfaction in doing that and helping others.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: I guess scouting is still going on some places and --

GENE DERFLER: (Chuckling) I don't know how the scouts are doing. I know that this gay thing it's gotten them into a lot of trouble and whether they want to allow them or not allow them.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

GENE DERFLER: Uh --

INTERVIEWER: Well, the Army is going to do that. They're going to allow them, of course.

GENE DERFLER: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: That's -- we won't go into that in length but that's a problem.

GENE DERFLER: Yeah. It's a tough issue too. Gay marriages? Who would've ever thought 50 years ago that would even be considered, you know?

INTERVIEWER: Well, you can go back even farther and you look at, you know, the segregation.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm. Yeah. That's -- that's unbelievable or even that women vote.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, boy. Yeah.

GENE DERFLER: Who would ever -- who -- could you explain to a kid that is 20-years old today that 50 years ago women couldn't vote.

INTERVIEWER: So, we've made a lot of advances.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: And we have other ones to make, I suppose, but in terms of something like this subject how do we measure how we're doing and that's -- I think one of the challenges that this organization faces, and the State, is how well are they doing and what's the report card show and is it something that gets great grades compared to other states. They haven't even heard the word urban growth boundary.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: Maybe they don't want to but it's been -- brought us a lot of good, I think.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: In the broadest sense, you know?

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: But other states are saying we don't want any part of that planning stuff and we want cities and counties to decide what they want to decide on their own and not be told by the -- by the state capitol what we can and can't do. Well, there's got to be a line with -- not a line but, you know, a point where you sort of find a middle ground there.

GENE DERFLER: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Our leaders are supposed to help us get there.

GENE DERFLER: Yeah. Unfortunately, regulations -- we've become over-regulated

but we're -- we're going to get a lot more of it as we get -- grow in population and -- and --

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. It's -- that's a whole -- you and I have a lot of subjects to talk about. We could talk for hours couldn't we about these things?

GENE DERFLER: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Maybe we'll get together over coffee some time and --

GENE DERFLER: Okay.

INTERVIEWER: Let's turn this thing off, but, uh -- yeah, you're right. What lies ahead? You know, how do we -- what do our educators tell our children, you know, about land use or --

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: -- whatever, you know, and -- and work and -- homework. You know, a lot of kids don't do homework anymore very much.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: That wasn't the way in my house. We've -- we were expected to do our work.

GENE DERFLER: Yeah. Well, there's a lot of things in education that bother me but, you know, like I say, that probably the top 25 percent are getting the best they've ever done in education but it's a -- it's the lower half that are not being educated.

INTERVIEWER: And there's lots of reasons for that.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: People from other countries.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: The household isn't what I call educationally focused.

GENE DERFLER: Well, and you have so many single parent families.

INTERVIEWER: Single parents. That's a whole other thing, you know, and the parent is struggling, he or she, to find a job where they can bring at least a minimal income in and -- boy it's tough and --

GENE DERFLER: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: -- maybe grandparents are involved. Maybe they're not.

GENE DERFLER: Yeah. It's a -- I don't know what it would be like if I -- like a lot of them they live one day to the next, you know, without knowing how they're going to pay their rent the next month or if they can get braces for the kids on their teeth.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, sure. Yeah.

GENE DERFLER: And it's --

INTERVIEWER: Or tonsils or a kids get hurt playing sports.

GENE DERFLER: I guess we all went through that when we started out but --

INTERVIEWER: Well, it's so darn expensive now to -- just to get some basic things done, you know.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: To have a knee surgery or something probably is \$50,000. I don't know.

GENE DERFLER: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: So -- anything else you'd like to talk about? I think we're about done with our thing today and --

GENE DERFLER: Nope. Just to kind of wind down.

INTERVIEWER: -- you'll get a copy of this form discussion.

GENE DERFLER: Or is it erratic? Okay. (Chuckling) I won't show it to my wife.

INTERVIEWER: And -- well, she might be interested in hearing what you had to say and, uh --

GENE DERFLER: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: These are not supposed to come up with any, you know, crisp solutions.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: It's for us to explain and allow you the -- particularly, the -- what we call the narrator, I know that's a funny term, but it's better than interviewee --

GENE DERFLER: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: -- in my opinion, but to lay out your views about this subject in general, but, uh -- and how are we doing and how far have we come and how far do we have to go.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: Those are not easy questions to answer, by any means and, you know, if we're -- if we were really doing this differently, we might have people do much more reading and stuff before they come in.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: So, we're both, you know, further along in terms of understanding a certain area.

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: But I think we have a lot of lessons to -- to help us with, I think, us being other citizens, in terms of your political experience and how our elected bodies run.

GENE DERFLER: It's a great learning experience.

INTERVIEWER: And how do we -- you know, how do we get you to put all this down so we can read about it and, you know, you're going to be gone one of these days, and I will, and -- it's not that books haven't been written about this stuff by any means but --

GENE DERFLER: Um hmm.

INTERVIEWER: -- are there some lessons out there?

GENE DERFLER: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Maybe that's right where we want to end up with today is what are the lessons we're learning here and how do we get those documented and how do we share them?

GENE DERFLER: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: How do we talk about them in a civil way too.

GENE DERFLER: History is a -- okay. So, if you don't -- if you have no history you -- you're going to repeat the same errors and --

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Well, thanks, again.

GENE DERFLER: You bet.

(Concluded)