

# BRIAN★DUBIE

P R E S S                      S H O P

## Dubie: Jobs are top focus

NEAL P. GOSWAMI

Posted: 01/28/2010 10:56:24 PM EST

BENNINGTON -- Lt. Gov. Brian Dubie, in town Thursday for his statewide "jobs tour," said Bennington area businesses have the same concerns as those in other parts of the state -- taxes on small businesses are too burdensome and regulations too stringent.

'Loud and clear' on reform

"I've heard tax credits and permit reform loud and clear, and I heard it again loud and clear this morning," Dubie, a Republican who is running for governor, said Thursday following an hour-long meeting with a group of area business officials.

He commended legislative leaders, some of whom are also running for governor as Democrats, for hosting a jobs forum at the Statehouse last week. "It's pretty much clear on the minds of everyone in elected office that jobs is the number one focus," he said.

But Dubie said his informal meetings with business owners and leaders around the state are bringing crucial ideas back to the capital. "The greater the vision the better we can serve," he said.

Local officials said Thursday that credit issues remain. Small businesses are still reeling from the recession and still find it difficult to obtain credit from lenders that remain tight-fisted.

Dubie said state government should find ways to ease the credit burden on small businesses. But, "as a matter of philosophy," government is not the best entity to distribute seed capital, he said.

Bennington County Industrial Corp. Executive Director Peter Odierna

decried the "punitive layers" of taxes facing local companies like Plasan Carbon Composites and Vermont Composites, which manufacture carbon fiber products. The composite industry is an emerging sector of the local and state economy, and cannot sustain increasing taxes, he said.

Those at the meeting suggested tax credits to businesses to offer internships to college students, and to students who agree to work for a company after graduating.

"I did hear some positive, specific suggestions about how the state can do its part to help grow jobs in southern Vermont and Bennington County," Dubie said.

BCIC Board of Directors President Paul Carroccio suggested state government crack down on spending increases driven by contracted workers -- like the teachers union and state workers. State spending must be cut and redirected into a jobs program, he said.

Dubie said state officials have worked to control costs. State workers have agreed to a pay cut, he said, and a group of teachers in Stowe voted to forego a contracted raise, he said.

"I think that's an affirmation that they get it," Dubie said.

State officials are continuing to look at the budget and find ways to bring spending in line.

"What we're going to have to do is what families are doing and what small businesses are doing. What we have to do in state government is we have to use our resources smarter," Dubie said. "It may be a matter of doing less with less. Hopefully it is a matter of doing more with less."

Bennington Area Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Joann Erenhouse said the state must maintain, and should increase, the budget for marketing the state elsewhere.

No promises can be made, however, as the budget process continues, Dubie said.

"We've got these budgetary challenges and I'm not going to make any promises I can't keep," he said.

Dubie also visited Plasan Carbon Composites, Plasan North America, Maplebrook farms and Energizer on Thursday. He's held similar events in Rutland, Brattleboro, Waterbury and Randolph.

Contact Neal P. Goswami at [ngoswami@benningtonbanner.com](mailto:ngoswami@benningtonbanner.com)