



Dealing with His Own Hurdles, Barry Hoeven Works to Help Others

By John Dunlap – Editor, SSA Globe

“You don’t realize the value of every day until you have been through what I have. You come to realize that every day is a gift.”

~ Barry Hoeven



Barry Hoeven meets with Dr. Robert Figlin to discuss kidney cancer research.

Barry Hoeven doesn’t want you to feel sorry for him. Yes, he has kidney cancer and has lived with more physical adversity in 13 years than ten people are likely to have in a lifetime. Yes, he loves his life and his work in self storage, but even more he loves the fact that he is doing something to help others with kidney cancer.

So don’t feel sorry for Hoeven...consider supporting Kure It, an independent non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that he founded to help those doing cancer research on kidney cancer and other orphan cancers.

Hoeven is the founder of Westport Properties, a full-service real estate company specializing in self storage and headquartered in Newport Beach, California. Under that umbrella is US Storage Centers which manages 48 facilities (and has a financial interest in 32) located in California, Arizona, Texas, Tennessee, Florida, Maryland, New Jersey and Connecticut. He is a proud Southern Californian, and an even prouder USC Trojan, having graduated from the school. It is safe to say that, since 1980 when he started

See Hoeven, page 10

Hoeven, from page 9

working with Public Storage, Hoeven has been an unqualified success story in the industry.

But in 1998 life took a terrible turn for Hoeven.

“I had been experiencing some back pain and couldn’t sleep and went to a hospital in San Diego, where they immediately did some X-rays,” says Hoeven. “The doctors and nurses all surrounded me when the results came back and I knew it wasn’t good. It turns out that I had a tumor on my kidney as large as the kidney itself. I returned home to my own doctor and hospital and had my left kidney taken out. The hope, at that time, was that they had gotten it all.”

Hoeven went for five years thinking he was cancer free and doctors recommended that he stop with the screenings. But he kept on getting them and, unfortunately, in the sixth year nodules were discovered on his right lung. A biopsy was done in which his lung was punctured and then it was determined that he needed to have the lung wedged, and 15% of the lung was removed.

The 3rd Annual Kure It Networking Cruise and Poker Run was held this past July in Newport Harbor in conjunction with the California Self Storage Association Economic Summit. The event raises about \$35,000 for research each year.

The Wakeup Call

It was then, in 2004, that Hoeven realized his problems weren’t likely to go away.

“That was the wakeup call for me,” Hoeven said. “I was told that I needed an oncologist and was able to find one of the best in the country at UCLA, Dr. Robert Figlin. I started

See Hoeven, page 12



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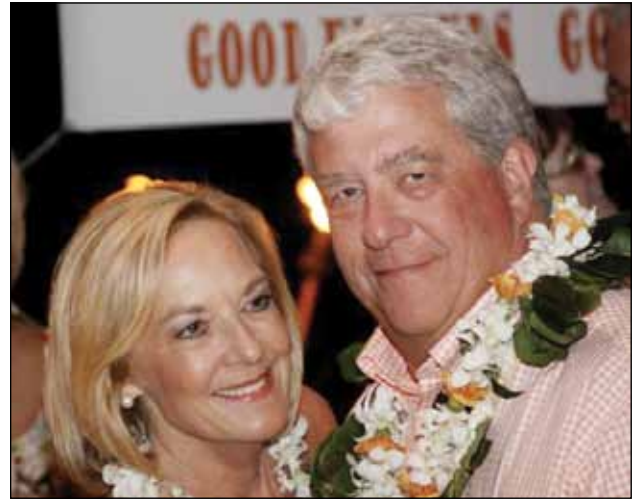
Hoeven, from page 10

thinking about cancer research and assumed that he had federal money. When I asked him about funding he said that to get federal funding, you have to have promising ideas and to reach those ideas you need solid research. He then told me that he and other researchers have to go out and virtually beg for the money they need to do the basic research that could then lead to a federal grant. And that's when I told him that I wanted to help."

At first, Hoeven thought it would be good just to write a big check and help Figlin. But then he realized that he wanted to do more—in essence, he wanted to raise funds to help not only Figlin, but other researchers who needed the basic money to further their findings and possibly set themselves up for grants. Thus was born Kure It.

"The idea behind Kure It is basically to try to raise lots of money in little places on a constant basis," says Hoeven. "So we started doing things like adding 50¢ to the charge of rental units at our facilities and having that money go to Kure It.

"I always have been concerned about where money that is donated goes," adds Hoeven. "You could give \$1 for cancer at a grocery store and have no idea where it goes. But I



Barry celebrates his 60th birthday with wife Cinda.

wanted things to be open and transparent about where all the money we raise goes."

Meanwhile, life was not getting any easier for Hoeven. He had part of his right kidney removed, then another wedge done, this time on his left lung. He started using a treatment drug called Sutent.

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“Over the last 18 months the tumors seem to have become more stable,” he says. “But every day is a different one for me. I might really hurt one day, feel good the next, real bad the next and then good again. The trouble is that I’m dealing with the side effects of certain drugs and then the side effects of a drug to treat the side effects.”



“It is important for me to leave a legacy and make a difference.”

Barry Hoeven

The Numbers Don’t Lie

Hoeven remains upbeat about his world and especially pleased that Kure It just passed the \$1 million dollar mark in donations. His hope is that Kure It will get to the point where it can raise \$1 million every year. And he feels especially pleased that the self storage industry has stepped in to donate to the cause.

“Self storage has been the biggest single contributor,” Hoeven says, “although we just got a check from an individual for \$100,000 and that is greatly appreciated.”

As optimistic as Hoeven may be about the direction of Kure It, he is a realist about his own battle with cancer and that facing others in the world.

“One in every two men and one in every three women will get cancer before they die,” Hoeven says. “Some of them may be curable or at least held off so that people can live longer, but the ugly reality is that many, many people we

know in our lives will get cancer. It is sort of like sitting in a classroom and realizing that most of the people around you in that class will get cancer.”

“My fate is likely already cast,” concludes Hoeven. “So it is important for me to leave a legacy and make a difference.”

It is safe to say that Barry Hoeven is making a huge difference. He’s an inspiration to everyone he meets and he still plans to attend SSA national conferences in Orlando and Las Vegas in 2012. If you have a chance to meet him, go shake his hand...then promise him you’ll give a donation to Kure It. That will surely put a well-earned smile on his face. ❖



To donate to Kure It, you can go to the non-profit’s website (www.kureit.org) or speak with Karen Jones, Director, Kure It Cancer Research at (949) 428-7081 or e-mail KarenJ@KureIt.org.

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