ON OUR COVER

Summer construction is underway in Josephine County with a $28 million project on interstate 5.

INSIDE COVER

Trucks queue in the slow lane climb of Sexton Mountain on northbound Interstate 5.

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Project replaces 1955-built bridge with wider, safer structure
“The Josephine County Fairgrounds signal project addresses the high crash rate at that intersection,” said ODOT Project Leader Jayne Randleman. “It is good to see the project is almost finished.

“This particular intersection saw more than its share of rear-end crashes. Traffic was very congested during peak travel times, partially due to the intersection’s close proximity to traffic signals at Ringuette Street and Redwood Avenue.”

Prime contractor Copeland Sand and Gravel of Grants Pass is wrapping up the project’s last phase and punch list, following a brief, planned work stoppage to accommodate the 54th Annual Boatnik celebration.

“Lines and arrows are all that’s left to finish for a project with a decade-long history of discussion and collaboration between ODOT, the city of Grants Pass, Josephine County and local stakeholders,” Randleman said. “It is quite something to think this project has been on the books for nearly a decade.”
After the Fairgrounds signal removal last March, prime contractor Copeland Sand and Gravel worked on sidewalks and new driveways for the businesses on the north side of U.S. 199, including two gas stations and a sports bar.

**Project scope includes:**

- Extending left-turn lanes on U.S. 199 at Ringuette Street;

- Widening the roadway at the intersection of Redwood Avenue and U.S. 199 to allow U-turns for commercial trucks;

- Adding a crosswalk on the west side of Ringuette Street for pedestrians wanting to traverse U.S. 199;

- Building a new sidewalk from the Fairgrounds entrance to Ringuette Street on the north side of U.S. 199; and

- Adding a left-turn arrow to the existing center lane on Ringuette Street for northbound travel, effectively making a dual left turn, from Ringuette Street to westbound U.S. 199.

On any given day, 40,000 vehicles travel along U.S. 199 from U.S. 101 on the Oregon Coast to Interstate 5, the West Coast’s busiest freight route.

The project was initially designed as a stand alone safety project. Safety improvements focused on the Fairgrounds signal’s close proximity to the Ringuette Street signal, as well as the higher-than-average crash rate associated with the Fairgrounds intersection (an average of 2.5 crashes per month).

ODOT and the Rogue Valley Area Commission on Transportation folded the project into its U.S. 199 Expressway project in 2003, following a series of fatal crashes in the corridor between Midway Avenue and the South Y intersection. The first two phases of the U.S. 199 Expressway project are complete. The third phase, located in the more urban portion between Dowell Road and the South Y intersection, was shelved when the City of Grants Pass and Josephine County withdrew support.

ODOT later revisited the original Fairgrounds Signal safety project, adding improvements for pedestrian connectivity on Ringuette Street.
ODOT completed a federally-required Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) that is necessary before construction can begin on the first two phases of the Oregon 62: I-5 to Dutton Road project.

After nearly nine years of planning and public meetings, the Oregon 62: I-5 to Dutton Road project team achieved a major milestone last month — completion of the federally-required Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision.

“Both documents are necessary before construction can begin,” said ODOT Project Leader Dick Leever. “We’re now looking forward to 2014 when the first phase of construction goes to bid.”

The $120 million multimodal project is designed to increase capacity and improve safety along Crater Lake Highway. Some sections of the corridor see higher volumes of traffic than Interstate 5. Higher crash data on some Oregon 62 intersections, primarily between I-5 and Delta Waters Road, are another safety concern.

“The corridor is a critical business connection, locally and regionally, for freight, tourism and commuters,” said Leever. “The Crater Lake Highway currently exceeds capacity standards and future growth is expected to significantly increase traffic volumes.”

The 4.5-mile expressway would start with three lanes of eastbound traffic at Poplar and Bullock Roads near Fred Meyer. Through traffic would turn left on a small directional interchange located across from Whittle Road. Traffic would then travel along a four-lane expressway on the east side of the Medford Airport, span over Vilas Road, and connect to the existing Crater Lake Highway near Corey Road.
Traffic destined for commercial centers such as Costco, Lowe’s and Safeway would continue as is done today. The addition of sidewalks and transit-related enhancements are planned on the existing Oregon 62 corridor.

One of the project’s biggest features will be a four-lane, access-controlled expressway that provides faster travel and improved safety within and throughout the region.

“The project’s first phase should take two construction seasons to complete,” Leever said. “Phase two is planned to go to bid in 2016 and should take another two years to complete.

“Motorists won’t be driving on the new expressway until 2018.”

While most of the work will occur off existing roadways when the first phase of construction begins, the section of Oregon 62 between Poplar Drive and Delta Waters Road will be a challenge. ODOT plans to take advantage of a wide section of right of way on the south side of that section of highway.

“Much of the work will be done at night or behind solid barrier,” said Leever. “Project staging will be important to keep traffic moving and business accesses open. For example, traffic may be pushed over to one side of the roadway with construction work occurring behind a concrete barrier. Once that work is finished, traffic would be switched over to the other side of the highway, so the contractor can complete the second half.”

According to Leever, a major concern voiced during the public outreach was how the entire project, estimated to cost $400 million, would impact individual properties along Oregon 62. Both the northern portion of the corridor from Corey Road to Dutton Road and the southern portion from I-5 to Poplar Drive are planned for future construction. However, there is no funding currently programmed for these future phases.

“Given the transportation budgets of today and the forecast, we’re really thankful we have the funds to begin construction on the first two phases of the project,” said Leever.
This summer, Interstate 5 highway construction is a blast. Literally.

A $28 million project repaves 17 miles of I-5 from Hugo north to Glendale, improves the curves in the southbound lanes south of Smith Hill, and builds a northbound climbing lane over Sexton Summit.

Climbing lane construction requires several nights of blasting through mid-July.

Rock blasting, especially next to I-5, requires good planning and timing.

“The contractor prefers to blast in the evening when there is still daylight,” said ODOT Project Manager Ted Paselk. “The trade-off is traffic volumes are higher at that time than if we were blasting in the middle of the night.”

To keep traffic moving, ODOT employs rolling slowdowns. Using pilot vehicles, ODOT slows I-5 traffic to about 30 miles an hour from both Glendale and Rogue River. I-5 on-ramps in the project area are temporarily closed during the rolling slowdowns.

“The rolling slowdowns give the contractor at least 20 minutes to blast and clean up any rock that blows onto the highway,” Paselk said.

Climbing lane construction required the closure of the emergency shoulder on I-5. Prime contractor Knife River Corporation of Central Point placed concrete barrier in the work zone so equipment can begin the widening process.

Jacques P. DePlois
Veterans Disability Benefits Attorney

My veteran’s disability law practice includes representation throughout the VA disability benefits claims and appeals process. I am certified as an attorney who may practice before the Veterans Administration, and I represent veterans at VA regional offices, the Board of Veterans Appeals. I am admitted to the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (USCAVC), and argue appeals on veteran’s behalf before the appeals court. Although I am located in Coos Bay, Oregon I have been representing veterans throughout Oregon for the past 20 years with the following physical and mental impairment claims:

- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- PTSD and female veterans
- Additional mental impairments
- Traumatic brain injury (TBI)
- Back and spinal injuries
- Knee, leg and arm injuries
- Widows benefits (DIC)

I also obtain total benefits if you are unable to work as a result of your service connected disability.
“Driving on I-5 may take a little longer,” said ODOT Project Information Specialist Dan Latham.

Latham said northbound I-5 traffic, depending on the time of day and season, may encounter delays and congestion as slow moving vehicles remain in the slow lane.

“Until we transition into the paving stage on the climbing lane, traffic will remain separated from the heavy equipment needed to excavate the slope for a new travel lane and shoulder,” Latham said.

The 12-foot climbing lane will run on about 2.8 miles, starting as an extension of the Hugo (exit 66) interchange’s northbound on-ramp, ending just beyond the crest of the Sexton Mountain pass. The climbing lane is being built where the shoulder currently exists. A new 10-foot shoulder will be built to the right of the climbing lane.
“Drivers need to keep an eye on the flow of traffic and watch out for slow-moving vehicles and quick lane changes,” said Latham.

Prime contractor Knife River Corporation is also currently working on Old Highway 99 and around I-5 exit 66. Motorists should use caution and watch for workers and equipment along the highway.

“The project is moving about 250,000 cubic yards of soil and rock to make room for the climbing lane,” Paselk said.

The material is being transferred to three areas along I-5 — the Merlin interchange, the Hugo interchange and slightly north of the Hugo interchange along Old Highway 99 — enough to fill nearly 14,000 18-yard dump trucks.

“These fill locations reduce the hauling cost and, by extension, reduce the overall project cost,” said Paselk.

**Steep climbs**

Some of the steepest grades on the Interstate Highway System are located on I-5 in southern Oregon.

Commercial trucks have used the I-5 shoulders, designed to provide a safe refuge for disabled vehicles, to navigate southern Oregon’s mountain passes. Trucks using the shoulder cause significant damage that requires frequent repair.

The new climbing lane is expected to reduce the frequency of I-5 closures related to commercial trucks, especially during winter driving conditions. The new climbing lanes are being built to today’s engineering standards, thereby reducing the need for on-going shoulder maintenance.

“Southern Oregon’s mountain passes are a weak link on the corridor,” said ODOT Project Leader Mark Leedom, who managed design for the I-5: Glendale to Hugo Paving & Sexton Climbing Lane project. “On each steep climb, trucks slow down in the outside lane, which results in immediate congestion on the pass, increasing the possibility of crashes.”

While most freeway climbs are built on grades of 5 percent or less, the northbound I-5 lanes on Sexton Mountain present a 6.13-percent grade. Trucks frequently slow to less than 30 mph during the climb. The speed difference relative to other traffic can be hazardous.

“The Federal Highway Administration identified that some of the worst truck bottlenecks in the nation are caused by steep grades on I-5 in southern Oregon.”

When one commercial truck attempts to pass another slow-moving vehicle, both I-5 lanes are blocked, forcing traffic to brake hard or suddenly change lanes to avoid a collision. Some trucks drove along the shoulder but this left no room for disabled vehicles.
More truck climbing lanes
ODOT recently constructed three short climbing lanes, each roughly one-mile long, on I-5 in Douglas County. The truck climbing lanes are located southbound at Rice Hill (milepost 147) and one in each direction on ‘Gumby Hill’ (milepost 137) the steep grade located between Sutherlin and Oakland. Climbing lanes can also be found further north on I-5 (a 3-mile lane south of Salem) and on Interstate 84 (a 7-mile lane east of Pendleton).

Other potential truck climbing lanes have been identified in southern Oregon, although no other projects are currently funded. ODOT will continue to build on its past success of incorporating truck climbing construction into I-5 repaving projects.

“The benefits of truck climbing lanes extend well beyond Oregon to the neighboring states of Washington and California,” Leedom said.

Ashland interchanges get kudos from City
The recently completed work on the Interstate 5-Ashland interchanges received a job well done by the City of Ashland last month.

ODOT and Landscape Architect John Galbraith were recognized by the Ashland Historic Commission for the outstanding aesthetic work done on exits 14 and 19, namely the Art Deco bridge design, color and landscaping.

The agency replaced the exit 19 bridge and modified the existing exit 14 overpass and interchange through the Oregon Transportation Investment Act.

“We’re honored to be recognized by the city,” said ODOT Area Manager Art Anderson. “We appreciated the advisory committee’s hard work, especially since it will be seen and enjoyed by residents and visitors for generations to come.”

Because exit 14 is the first urban interchange into Oregon from California, consideration was given to make it a gateway, constructing the bridge to meet the local aesthetics.

During design, ODOT asked the city in 2009 to appoint an aesthetics advisory committee to come up with a look. After several meetings the committee chose designs to match the downtown Art Deco look, as well as colors to reflect the nearby natural environment.
Highlighting more than 100 work zones on the state’s roads, the 2013 Oregon Road Projects map is your resource for smooth and safe travel this summer. Available for free at DMV field offices, ODOT offices and visitor centers around the state, the complete version is also available online on the ODOT website.

For current road conditions, including construction activity, call 511 or go online to TripCheck.com. A quick visit can help you avoid traffic congestion, work zone delays, or hazardous road conditions.

“The Oregon Road Projects map is a handy guide that helps motorists as they plan ahead for extended trips,” said ODOT Regional Traffic Safety Coordinator Rosalee Senger. “We want people prepared as they encounter work zones during the busy summer construction period.”

According to Senger, distracted driving is the most common cause of work zone crashes. Drivers and passengers — not workers — make up most work zone fatalities. Six people lost their lives in work zone crashes in 2012.

“It is so important to eliminate distractions before you travel,” Senger said. “Be sure important items such as maps and sunglasses are within easy reach.

“And always pull over to a safe place to use your cell phone.“

Work Zone Driving Tips

• Pay attention to driving, especially in the transition zone before the work area.
• Orange (signs, cones, barrels and barricades) is your clue to slow down. Speeding is the second most common cause of work zone crashes.
• Don’t tailgate. Double the distance you follow a vehicle.
• Don’t wait to the last second. Get in the correct lane well in advance. Work zone traffic lanes often are narrow, without shoulders or emergency lanes.

Also, be aware of temporary accesses on either side of the roadway.
• Expect delays — plan for them and leave early so you can drive safely through the work zone.
• Patience and courtesy are important.
• Avoid work zones when you can by using a different route.
• Know before you go. Call 511 or visit TripCheck.com to check routes, work zones and road and weather conditions before you leave.
1. I-5 Pacific Highway — Pavement work north of Central Point to Gold Hill, MP 35 – 43. Nighttime work from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. Minor delays. Completion: 2013.


5. I-5 Pacific Highway — Multiple improvements to the OR 569: Randy Papé Beltline Interchange, MP 195, including improvements to bicycle/pedestrian paths to Beltline; new Beltline bridge over I-5; new westbound Beltline ramp to southbound I-5; new signal at southbound I-5 ramp to Beltline. Expect lane restrictions on Beltline bridge over I-5; detour for EB Beltline to NB I-5 ramp during nighttime closures. Completion: 11/2014. [ITA]


8. I-84 Columbia River Highway — New bridge pavement and joints at Runkel Creek, Eagle Creek and Dodson bridges on seven-mile stretch of I-84, MP 35 – 42. Occasional single-lane and ramp closures. Completion: 9/2013.


10. I-84 Columbia River and Sherman Highways — Biggs Junction interchange retrofit, including new bridges, ramps and paving, MP 104.5 and U.S. 97 MP 0 – 2. I-84 traffic reduced to one lane in each direction. U.S. 97 will be two lane, two- way traffic with occasional flagging and delays less than 20 minutes. Completion: May 2015. [ITA]


13. I-84 Old Oregon Trail Highway — Build and upgrade several chain-up areas between Pendleton and Spring Creek, MP 217 – 245. Shoulder and intermittent lane closures at various locations, minor delays. Completion: 10/2013. [ITA]


17. I-84 Old Oregon Trail Highway — Pavement repairs between Huntington and Farewell Bend, MP 34.1 – 34.5, and between North Fork Jacobson Gulch and Idaho state line, MP 368 – 378. Reduced speeds, traffic pattern changes and single lane travel for eastbound and westbound traffic. Completion: 12/2013.

U.S. HIGHWAYS


20. U.S. 20 Cascade Avenue (Sis- ters) — Reconstruct existing roadway and sidewalk through downtown, starting July 2013. Single lane closures at night with 20 minute delays and a full closure of highway from March 2014 through May 2014 with detour in place. Downtown business access will remain open throughout project. Completion: 10/2014.


23. U.S. 26 Sunset Highway — Pave roadway, install in-laid durable striping from Wolf Creek to NW Hayward Road, MP 57 – 47.5. Nighttime work, single lane closures controlled by flaggers. Minor delays. Completion 8/2013.


26. U.S. 30 Northwest St. Helens Road — Pave and stripe from NW McNary Drive to near the Multnomah County line, add waterproof mem- brane to McCarthy Creek Bridge and repair shoulders, MP 16 – 17.9. Night lane closures, with one lane in each direction near Cornelius Pass Road for four late summer days. Completion: Fall 2013.


53. OR 39 — Pave roadway, install sidewalks, upgrade traffic signals. Completion: Fall 2013.
59. OR 213 Cascade Highway South — Replace bridge, realign roadway, install cable median barrier and pavement marking. Completion: 11/2013.
60. OR 6 Draper Creek Highway — Pave roadway from Draper Creek to OR 234, MP 10 – 13. Nighttime construction from 7 p.m. – 7 a.m. Expect minor delays. Completion: 10/2013.
62. OR 60 Baker–Copperfield Highway — Upgrade guardrail east of Richland, OR 51 – 64. Lane closures, flaggers, delays up to 20 minutes. Completion: 12/2013.
63. OR 214 Silver Creek Falls Highway — Resurfacing and widening, add bike lanes, add on-street parking. Completion: 9/2013.
64. OR 257 Old Oregon Trail Highway — Clean-up rock wall to reduce snow drifts in Pyles Canyon. Completion: 9/2013.
65. OR 99 – Safety improvements, streetscape enhancements, add bike lanes, widen sidewalks, 9th Street and East Main Street in Cottage Grove, MP 36 – 38. Lane closures and detours. Completion: 12/2013.
71. OR 245 Dooley Mountain Highway — Resurfacing roadway sections between OR 7 and U.S. 26 near Unity. Lane closures, flaggers, delays up to 20 minutes. Completion: 7/2013.
72. OR 320 Echo Highway — Pave roadway between junctions, OR 207 and Echo, MP 27 – 37. Lane closures, flaggers, delays up to 20 minutes. Completion: 9/2013.
75. OR 422/4225 Chiloquin Highway/Spur – Bridge construction. Completion: 12/2013.
76. OR 569 Randyp Papé Beltline — Install ramp lanes to two eastbound and two westbound on-ramps to Beltline at River Road, River Avenue, Green Acres Road and Coburg Road. Lane restrictions and short delays on the ramps. Completion: 6/2013.
78. 6th Street – 6th Street (Former U.S. 97, Redmond) — Reconstruct 6th Street with minimal delays, 6th Street closed between Deschutes Avenue and Ardor Avenue. March through May with a detour on 7th Street. Downtown business access will remain open throughout project. Completion: 7/2013.
79. Hurricane Creek Road (Wallowa County) — Rebuild and widen Hurricane Creek Road between River Road and Highway 82. Lane closures, flaggers, delays up to 20 minutes. Completion: 11/2013.
Recreational motorists headed to the upper Rogue River travel through Shady Cove on Oregon 62. Hoping to make their community more attractive for residents and visitors alike, city leaders are collaborating with ODOT to add several enhancements to its paving project scheduled for construction in 2016.

“For some time, we’ve looked for an opportunity to improve Shady Cove with bike lanes and sidewalks,” said Shady Cove Mayor Ron Holthusen. “We want both residents and visitors to enjoy the city’s stores and restaurants.”

The Oregon 62 overlay project will extend north from the Rogue River Bridge to Cleveland Street in Shady Cove. With strong support from the city, ODOT began developing project concepts even though the overlay project won’t begin for another three years.

“Our project team thought it made sense to see if we could attach funds specifically targeted for bicyclists and pedestrians,” said ODOT Project Manager Jayne Randleman. “The need is there to keep people off the highway and shoulder, especially children walking to school.

“Two travel lanes with a center turn lane, bike lanes and sidewalks all sounded good. However, we first needed to clarify the location of ODOT right of way before we could enhance this overlay project.”

**Studying design options**
Shady Cove businesses voiced concern over the possibility of losing on-street parking. Shops and businesses located north of the Rogue River Bridge were most critical of the plans, believing the project would reduce parking width because state right of way is close to the businesses.
At the same time, ODOT refocused on keeping construction impacts to a minimum not only for the businesses but also for the project budget.

“The project team also consulted with the trucking industry,” said ODOT Project Information Specialist Gary Leaming. “We developed six different project designs in order to find a balance between needs. We finally came across a design that moved the sidewalks to the storefronts with a public easement.”

**Presenting the plan**

Earlier this spring, the ODOT project team revisited with Shady Cove businesses. The team shared the new design and explained how it would affect the individual businesses. The team also reviewed other project changes that could reduce impacts to parking and properties.

“Where the project stands today is due to a constant ‘we can make it happen’ attitude, shared by ODOT and the City,” said Shady Cove City Councilor Jim Ulrich.

Mayor Holthusen and all city councilors have participated in most of the business/property owner meetings about the project.

“Our team met with the folks at Jack’s Fishin’ Hole and placed a row of orange cones on the ground to show where the new curb would be constructed,” Leaming said. “The additional meetings and physical examples made a huge difference. Business owners could better see what their parking and property would look like after construction.

“A lot of their concerns went away.”

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Thanks to Zen’s for this comparison of a 1 year old riding lawn mower filter using ethanol gasoline! **PROTECT YOUR INVESTMENTS!** Get the good stuff. Good ’ole gas without the ethanol!
MAKING BYBEE CORNER SAFER

Last month, ODOT returned to the intersection of Oregon 238 and West Main Street, locally known as Bybee Corner, to make additional safety improvements, following a larger safety project that was completed in 2005.

The current project lengthens the right turn lane for motorists travelling from Jacksonville, adds a concrete median to better separate the turning lane, and adjusts the location of stop bars on West Main Street.

Reports of crashes involving left turns from Oregon 238 indicate drivers had trouble discerning what oncoming traffic was going to do until it was too late. ODOT traffic safety engineers revisited the intersection to find the reasons.

“The agency brought in engineers from around the state to perform a safety audit,” said ODOT District Manager Jerry Marmon. “What the engineering team discovered is that drivers turning left from Oregon 238 to West Main Street have a short period of time to analyze whether an oncoming driver is turning right onto West Main or proceeding on to Central Point.”

The short reaction time and the opportunity to misjudge intent led some drivers to turn left in front of oncoming vehicles.

“Drivers turning left from Oregon 238 only had a couple of seconds to make a judgment,” said Marmon.

“Our engineering team determined we needed to increase that decision-making time and increase the safety margin.

“Separating the turn lane with a concrete median will be a great visual clue for drivers who’ve needed additional time to determine what oncoming traffic is going to do.”

According to Marmon, the $150,000 project is relatively inexpensive because all of the work occurs within state right of way. The project is scheduled to wrap up by the Fourth of July holiday weekend.

2005 safety project
The Bybee Corner intersection was once listed among the top 5 percent in Oregon for crash frequency and severity on the Safety Priority Index System (SPIS), which ODOT uses to identify potential safety problems. Locations within the top 5 percent draw additional traffic investigation and often become candidates for safety projects. A 2005 safety project addressed poor sight distance and geometry. As a result, Bybee Corner dropped off the top 5 percent SPIS list.

Hwy. 238-to-Jackson St. project
The intersection realignment at Bybee Corner was spurred not just by the crash rate but also by a jurisdictional transfer of roads between Jackson County and ODOT in 2002. That transfer was included in the Hwy. 238-to-Jackson St. project, which rerouted a section of Oregon 238
and reconfigured the intersection of Oregon 99 and 62, locally known as the Big Y intersection.

The new configuration, locally known as the Big X intersection, provided a more efficient and direct connection and removed non-destination traffic traveling on Oregon 238 out of downtown Medford.

“At the time, the Hwy. 238-to-Jackson St. project was the largest state project within the Rogue Valley in more than a decade,” said ODOT Project Information Specialist Gary Leaming. “The Big Y intersection was one of the most confusing and congested traffic bottlenecks in the area.”

The $31 million Hwy. 238-to-Jackson St. project constructed roadways, storm drainage systems, traffic signals, and permanent signing.
Motor Carrier’s multi-agency operation succeeds on the Oregon coast

Last month, Motor Carrier Enforcement Officers (MCEOs) based out of southern Oregon participated in a multi-day coastal enforcement operation. The MCEOs managed a set of portable scales at the ODOT maintenance yard in Port Orford while coastal weigh stations — Bandon, Hauser, Coaledo, Myrtle Point, Brookings and Rainbow Rock — were manned in Curry, Coos and Douglas counties.

MCEOs handle fiscal and safety requirements for the trucking industry. This work includes ensuring weight mile tax compliance, licensing and registration, as well as ensuring trucks are not exceeding load and height and width restrictions.

MCEOs are also certified safety inspectors. They look for 12 critical items, including hours of service, properly inflated tires, working lights, cargo security, and wheels and frames that are in good condition with no cracks.

According to Ashland-Roseburg District Manager Leslie Elbon, the multi-agency operation conducted in May required teamwork and collaboration to keep things running smoothly.

“Planning for these operations begins several months in advance,” Elbon said. “We coordinate with other agencies and pool our resources together, so that we maintain coverage at the Ashland Port of Entry and along the Interstate 5 corridor, which is the heart of our district.”

According to Elbon, weighing a truck with portable scales is a bit trickier than operations at a fixed weigh station. In a standard weigh station, a MCEO enters data into a computer as the trucker slowly drives over the scale. If the load is legal, a green light indicates the truck can start rolling down the highway.

The coastal enforcement operation uses mobile office vans equipped with portable scales. In Port Orford,
MCEOs detour trucks off U.S. 101 and into ODOT’s maintenance yard. Officers direct trucks onto the scales by hand while maintaining radio contact with the officer in the van. The load over each axle is weighed individually as the truck receives a visual safety inspection from another MCEO. Once the truck is cleared, the driver is directed to return to U.S. 101.

ODOT Motor Carrier coordinated with the Port Orford Police Department and Oregon State Police to set up the short-term work zone. The team weighed 1,867 trucks during the operation, issuing 36 warnings and 33 citations, which were directed to the Port Orford Municipal Court.

Senior officer Susan Chase said truckers are often appreciative when a safety hazard is detected — a violation that warrants stopping a truck — because they want to return home safely as well.

“The trucking industry cares,” Chase said. “If they missed something in transit, they want to correct it because this is their community. Their family and friends travel on the same highways.”

MCEOs support an economically viable environment on Oregon’s highways by reducing delays for the trucking industry. This is accomplished in part due to Oregon’s Green Light mainline truck preclearance system as well as Motor Carrier’s Trucking Online service that gives customers the ability to obtain credentials.

In just the first quarter of 2013, ODOT Motor Carrier weighed more than half a million trucks on static scales and precleared more than 380,000 trucks using Green Light weigh stations.
For more than 30 years, AARP Driver Safety has helped drivers improve their driving skills and stay safe on the road. For the last 18 years, AARP Driver Safety volunteer Pat Maness has volunteered to provide those driver safety classes in southern Oregon.

“Older drivers are concerned when they come in our classroom, so we try and put them at ease,” Maness said. “Education can help you drive longer and safer.”

Some attendees take the course to receive an insurance discount upon completion. Others sign up to refresh their driving skills.

“I ask people in my classroom, ‘When’s the last time you got an automobile manual out and read it?’” Maness said. “I get the answer ‘Oh, about 50 years ago.’”

Maness realized how sloppy his driving had become after taking the driver safety class himself.

“My mind was not on my driving.”

In his classes, Maness highlights how much the rules of the road have changed since his students first earned their drivers licenses.

“People are driving faster, there are more driver distractions and more traffic,” Maness said. “We work to give our students more driving knowledge. We have more retired people moving into Grants Pass and they come from all over the country. The laws are different. The roads are different. Driving is different in Oregon.”

Nationwide, about 7,000 AARP-trained volunteers instruct, administer and promote the Driver Safety course.

“We couldn’t do it without our volunteers,” said Shelley Buckingham, AARP Oregon Communications & Media Relations Director. “Pat is one of our finest instructors. We need more volunteers like him in southern Oregon.”

AARP membership is not required to take the course and there are no tests to pass. The six-hour course costs $12 for AARP members and $14 for non-members. Although the course is geared toward drivers who are 50 and older, the course is open to all ages.

**AARP helps you:**

- Update your driving knowledge;
- Learn defensive-driving skills;
- Compensate for normal age-related physical changes;
- Reduce your traffic violations, crashes and chances for injuries; and
- Drive more safely.

**REGISTER NOW**

AARP driver safety courses are scheduled at the Three Rivers Community Hospital (classroom A), 1505 NW Washington Blvd. in Grants Pass. You can register with RSVP at 541-956-4472 or call toll-free to 888-AARP-NOW (888-227-7669) or visit aarp.org/drive.

- July 9 & 11, 1-4 p.m.
- August 13 & 15, 1-4 p.m.
- Sept. 10 & 12, 1-4 p.m.
- Sept. 14, all-day Saturday
Utility work, the relocation of water and gas lines, on Oregon 62 near Eagle Point is scheduled to wrap up soon. The prime contractor, Oregon Mainline of McMinnville, will then begin a major facelift of the 3.6-mile section of highway.

Paving and widening on this section of Oregon 62, located north of Eagle Point between Linn Road and the intersection with Oregon 234, will begin after the Fourth of July holiday weekend.

Earlier this year, the ODOT project team briefed the Eagle Point City Council. The project received an exception to the city’s noise ordinance. Much of the construction work will be conducted at night, from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m., to reduce the impact on summer traffic and speed up the construction schedule.

“Local residents who use Barton Road and live in the adjacent neighborhoods will experience some construction noise and out-of-direction travel,” said ODOT Project Leader Jayne Randleman. “We weighed the impacts of different construction schedules. The benefit to this one is that it compresses a two-year highway project down to just one construction season.”

Oregon Mainline will build a continuous two-way, left-turn lane on Oregon 62 between Rolling Hills Drive and Crystal Drive.

“The contractor will widen Oregon 62 to accommodate the additional lane,” Randleman said. “This addition will improve the safety of the highway, providing a turning refuge for drivers.”

Slated for completion by the end of October, the project includes the following construction work in addition to repaving:

- Replaced culverts in the work zone (work was completed by the Eagle Point Irrigation District and Rawhide Excavating of Madras);
- Construct a turn pocket for left-turn traffic on to Barton Road. There will still be no left-turn movements out of Barton Road onto Oregon 62;
- Temporarily close the Barton Road access to expedite construction. Local access to Oregon 62 will detour on Sienna Hills Drive; and
- Relocate a limited number of mailboxes that will be impacted by the widening of Oregon 62.
Construction is underway to replace the aging and deficient Applegate River Bridge on U.S. 199 south of Grants Pass. The bridge is a vital connection between Interstate 5, the Illinois Valley, northern California and the Oregon coast.

Prime contractor Carter and Company of Salem began work on the $5.9 million project last April. The first stage of the project includes building the approaches of a temporary bridge just to the north of the existing structure. By July, the contractor will be able to work below the Applegate River’s ordinary high water mark.

When the existing bridge was built in 1955, about 2,000 vehicles crossed the 547-foot span daily. By 2011, the number of vehicles had increased to 10,300 per day. The bridge’s narrow 30-foot roadway and bridge rails do not meet today’s safety standards.

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The collapse of the Skagit River Bridge in May led Oregon media to ask about the state of bridges in this state.

Oregon has about 65 bridges with a steel through-truss design, the same used on the Skagit River Bridge. ODOT inspects bridges at least once every two years – more often as the condition of the bridge declines. Inspections help prioritize bridge repair investments.

ODOT has addressed Oregon’s aging bridges for more than 12 years. Environmental assessments of state bridges began in 2001, and the Economic and Bridge Options Report contributed to the passage of the 2003 Oregon Transportation Investment Act (OTIA III).

ODOT focused on bridges built with a reinforced concrete deck girder design that was used during the interstate-construction era of the late 1950s. The agency’s report revealed that these bridges were nearing or past their life expectancy. Many bridges had weakened to the point of requiring load limits.

ODOT’s $1.3 billion OTIA III State Bridge Delivery Program is wrapping up the repair and replacement of hundreds of bridges across the state to ensure the unrestricted movement of freight and spur economic growth. Building on the success of the first two phases of the OTIA program, the Legislature issued state bonds to finance $1.3 billion in work on state bridges, $300 million for local bridge projects and $86 million for city and county projects.

Work on the bridge program occurred in five overlapping stages, grouped by highway corridors across the state. This strategy helped keep traffic moving during construction and created unrestricted freight routes for commercial vehicles. It also allowed contractors to achieve economies of scale in performing design work, ordering materials, and mobilizing equipment and labor, which reduced program costs.

Oregonians had not seen an investment of this magnitude in highway and bridge construction since the state’s interstate freeway system was built in the 1950s and ‘60s.

Of the 365 bridges in the program, seven are currently under construction and another 263 have been completed and open to traffic.
“We repaired the Applegate River Bridge more than 10 years ago when it was in serious need of attention,” said ODOT Lead Bridge Engineer Bob Grubbs. “It’s good to replace it with a new bridge because it’s flat worn out.”

According to Grubbs, the new railings will meet today’s safety standards and, unlike the existing bridge that has six supports in the river channel, the new structure will only have two.

“The key is to build the bridge without seriously affecting traffic,” said ODOT Project Information Specialist Dan Latham. “That’s why a temporary bridge is being constructed. We want to keep traffic moving.”

According to Latham, the new bridge will be built on the same alignment. The detour structure is designed to be as wide as the old bridge.

Drivers are contending with traffic delays as the temporary bridge is being built. Flaggers are controlling traffic as dump trucks bring in fill material for the temporary bridge’s approaches and supports.

“It’s a pretty tight dance for the first stages of the project,” said Latham. “The compact rollers are working as the trucks come in to dump their loads and, then, turn around and go back out the same way.”

U.S. 199 traffic will switch to the temporary bridge, so Prime contractor Carter and Company can begin demolition on the old structure.