Blog Entries 2011

Tuesday, January 11th, 2011

## Replacing the Temporary Bridge

*From ODOT*- With all the construction work under way on the new Interstate 5 Willamette River bridges, it's easy to forget the bridge carrying I-5 traffic since 2004 is temporary.

This fall, when the new southbound bridge is complete, we'll shift all I-5 traffic onto it, which will allow us to dismantle the temporary bridge clearing the way for construction of the new northbound bridge.

As we closely watch construction of the new arch bridges, I think it's important to remember why we're building them.

When ODOT inspected the original I-5 Willamette River bridges in 2002, we discovered structural problems in the aging girders. We quickly put load limits in place that forced heavy haul truck traffic to detour on U.S. 97 through Central Oregon. The long detour increased the cost and time of moving goods in and through Oregon.

While we immediately started planning for new bridges to replace the old, we knew it would take significant amount of time to design and construct a bridge to meet the environmental and seismic standards for permanent bridges with a lifespan of 100 years. That was too long to wait to return heavy truck traffic to I-5 through Eugene-Springfield. Building a temporary bridge became the best interim solution.

We quickly designed a temporary bridge and acquired needed right of way and permits. Our contractor, Hamilton Construction, started work on the temporary bridge in 2003, and it opened to traffic in 2004. The temporary bridge was built using materials and methods that could be quickly installed, but it does not meet all standards required for a permanent bridge with 100-year lifespan.

The temporary bridge has carried traffic for more than six years. During that time heavy freight has moved easily on I-5. Truckers, and the consumers of the goods they transport, have avoided the economic impacts of a costly detour.

We expect the new bridges to be complete in 2013, almost a decade after the temporary bridge opened. By the time both new bridges are open to traffic, Oregonians will see a good return on their investment in the temporary bridge. In addition, material from the temporary bridge will be reused or recycled, and the right of way used for the temporary bridge will be returned to its natural state.

When the work is done, our goal is to leave the project area in far better shape than we found it.

Posted by Raymond Mabeyat12:06 PM

Thursday, January 13th, 2011

## Get a backstage look at the bridge construction

*From ODOT*- Most of us are fascinated by large highway construction projects. We crane our necks as we pass by, but how often do we get to see what is happening close-up?

The Willamette River Bridge project provides a unique opportunity to peek at changes from roadways or park paths. But even better, you can learn about the project and see it close up by taking advantage of a monthly tour.

Last year, students, senior citizens, business leaders, neighbors, elected officials and out-of-town visitors toured and learned more about one of the Oregon Department of Transportation's largest bridge projects.

Visitors have commented on the complexity of the project, the amount of steel and concrete needed, the skill of those working on the project, and the team's focus on protecting and enhancing the environment around the bridge.

Construction will continue late into 2013. Please take the opportunity for a tour and gain a better appreciation of the success being achieved on a very complex project. To sign up for a tour, call John Lively at (541) 484-7052, or e-mail John@cawood.com.

Posted byJyll Smith, ODOT PIO at9:12 AM

Wednesday, January 19th, 2011

*From ODOT*- The Arch Falsework comes down our contractor, Hamilton Construction, has spent more than nine months building the two graceful arched spans that will support the new southbound Interstate 5 bridge. As you travel past the construction project, you may have noticed the arches nearing completion. Starting last April, crews built falsework to form the arches. They started by erecting steel supports on the work bridge and welding them into place. On top of the steel supports, the crews built a wooden deck and forms that outlined the curve of the arches. Inside the arch forms, they built a “skeleton” of reinforcing steel bars that gives each arch both strength and flexibility. Finally, crews filled the forms with concrete that protects the reinforcing steel and adds to overall strength. Now that the arches can stand on their own, we have started dismantling the wooden forms and steel support system. Most all of the material will be saved and stored near the site and reused to build the arches for the northbound I-5 bridge. With all the falsework now removed in span 2, the weight of the arches is fully supported on large concrete shafts that were constructed deep in the ground on either bank and in the middle of the river. The graceful lines of the

river crossing can now be seen.  Here are the arches under construction, with falsework in place.

 Here are the span 2 arches standing free of falsework.

Posted by Karl Wieseke, ODOT Construction Project Managerat6:52 AM

Friday, January 21st, 2011

## Views from the I-5 Willamette River Bridge project

*From ODOT-* I thought it would be nice to share with you some of the lesser seen sights around the bridge project. I particularly like the icicles hanging from the falsework for the new bridge arches. ODOT and its contractors work in all kinds of weather to get the job done.



A squirrel explores along the new sound wall near the Laurel Hill Valley neighborhood that helps protect nearby homes from freeway noise.

 A worker in a basket crane puts final touches on the columns that will support the I-5 southbound bridge.

A steelworker guides one of the temporary beams into place that are used to build the new bridges over the Union Pacific Railroad tracks at the south end of the project. Note that he's wearing a special harness attached to the steel beam that protects him in case of a fall.

Posted by Jyll Smith, ODOT PIO at 8:39 AM

Tuesday, January 25th, 2011

## Cities, Parks and ODOT work collaboratively to improve the park path experience

*From ODOT*-As the ODOT Area Manager for Lane County, and one of the managers assigned to the WRB project, I have been working with parks stakeholders and the cities of Eugene and Springfield to improve the extensive network of park paths that pass under and around the new I-5 bridges.

Many cyclists, walkers and runners in Eugene and Springfield benefit from connections the existing paths make between the two cities. The WRB project is, however, providing a perfect opportunity to implement changes and additions to the system that will make the park path experience safer, and more convenient.

One of the planned improvements is to create a new viaduct path, built with beams recycled from the I-5 detour bridge, along the south bank of the Willamette River, and the north side of Franklin Boulevard. The existing South Bank Path that crosses under Franklin Boulevard will be abandoned and removed so that the area can be replanted and restored to a more natural state.

Look for the viaduct path to open late in 2013 or in early 2014 when the Willamette River Bridge replacements and all park improvements are complete. Construction of the viaduct path is a joint effort between ODOT and the City of Springfield.

In addition, we will be resurfacing all paths near the project, and will rebuild the intersection of the North Bank Path and the Knickerbocker Bridge to eliminate the steep transition between the two. I am excited about all of these planned improvements, and believe you will be as well.

Posted by Sonny Chickering, ODOT Area Managerat9:44 AM

Friday, January 28th, 2011

## What do you want to read about?

*From ODOT*-Our team has enjoyed the first six months of writing and posting to our project blog. The growing number of readers for each edition is encouraging. Our aim is to keep you, our readers, updated on the project and changes that might affect you, while providing a forum about issues and topics that interest you. We have more project information and pictures than we could possibly post, but we want to focus on what is of greatest interest to you, our readers. So far, we've been writing about things we think are interesting or useful. Now, we'd like to hear from you. So please take a moment to let us know:

- What blogs have been of most interest and value?
- What would you like to know about the project that we haven't covered yet?
- Do the photos, captions, drawings, and plans we post tell you what you want to know?
- What other ideas or suggestions do you have?

Thank you for reading the Willamette River project blog! We genuinely appreciate your comments and feedback.

Posted by Suzanne Roberts at 8:19 AM

Tuesday, February 1st, 2011

## Beyond the arches

*From ODOT*- With all the attention that's been focused on building the graceful arches for the new I-5 Willamette River Bridge, you may not realize that they are but part of a series of four independent bridges linked together form a single span from the north bank of the Willamette River to the south end of the project past Franklin Boulevard.

While the arch spans obviously catch your eye as they prominently cross the river, they are not the longest part of the new bridge.

South of the river, the new I-5 bridge crosses over Franklin Boulevard, railroad tracks, the I-5 off-ramp to Franklin Boulevard, pedestrian paths and local creeks and drainages. The bridge over the river is 806 feet long, but the portion from Franklin Boulevard south is 900 feet long.

We're building two more independent bridges south of the river. They will consist of box girder beams constructed on site followed by forming and pouring the bridge deck on top. Another much smaller box girder bridge will connect I-5 on the river's north bank to the arch bridges crossing the Willamette.

Each independent bridge must be tensioned separately. Once tensioned, the deck of the new southbound bridge will become one continuous smooth surface, from the north bank of the Willamette River to south of Franklin Boulevard.


The new bridge on the north bank of the Willamette River.


Bridge construction south of the river.

Posted by Jyll Smith, ODOT PIO at 3:52 PM

Friday, February 4th, 2011

## Whilamut Passage design enhancements will grace the Willamette River bridges

*From ODOT-*

As part of the Willamette River Bridge project, ODOT is working with Pacific Northwest artists to create enhancements near pedestrian paths on the north and south banks of the Willamette River and along Interstate 5 near the bridges.

The enhancements will follow the Whilamut Passage theme, to reflect an intersection in time, a confluence and a crossing. The Whilamut Passage theme will incorporate words, phrases and images that encompass the variety of users—past, present and future—as well as the area's geography.

Fourteen artists proposed and a volunteer selection committee selected five finalists whose proposals reflect the Whilamut Passage theme. The artists are all based in the Pacific Northwest: Adam McIsaac and Travis Mercier, rhiza Architecture + Design, Lillian Pitt, Devin Laurence Field, and Eutectica Design.

Examples of public art and enhancements by these teams can be found in Bend, Corvallis, Eugene, Springfield, Hillsboro, Lake Oswego, Portland and across the border in Washington. Some of the materials used by these artists in other communities include wood, concrete, stainless steel, and bronze.

The Community Advisory Group will make a recommendation to ODOT's design team on a finalist from the proposed designs in late April. Once selected, the artist will complete the design and engineering for bidding and installation.

According to the current design enhancement schedule, you will start to see the enhancements in the fall of 2013 or spring 2014, after both bridges have been completed.

Look for information in the near future about a public open house in Eugene the first week of April when all five finalists will present their proposed designs.

Posted byJyll Smith, ODOT PIO at5:01 PM

Monday, February 7th, 2011

## Design Complete on Willamette River Bridge

*From ODOT*-Another important milestone has been reached on the Willamette River Bridge project. Design of the northbound bridge, along with modifications to Interstate 5 lanes and ramps is complete. This is the last major engineering design work needed to guide completion of the new I-5 bridges. Finishing the design work is a result of close collaboration between Oregon Department of Transportation, OBEC Consulting Engineers, Hamilton Construction and a large group of key community stakeholders.

While the bridge and roadway design work has been completed other design efforts are ongoing. Regional artists continue to work with stakeholders to design artistic enhancements to the project area.

The team, especially our committed stakeholders, is to be complimented on a job well done. I know the community will be pleased with the results when the entire project is complete.

Posted by Raymond Mabeyat10:33 AM

Friday, February 11th, 2011

## A lot of concrete, rebar and other materials

*From ODOT*- Have you ever wondered about the amount of material it takes to construct a new bridge, especially one as large as the new southbound Willamette River Bridge?

Visitors on the project tours often ask this question. Here's the answer.

The finished portion of the bridge will be made up of 2.7 million pounds of rebar and 7,300 cubic yards of concrete. Rebar is used to add tensile strength to concrete. It is usually made of carbon steel, and has ridges for better anchoring into the concrete.

The rebar ranges from as small as 1/2 inch in diameter up to 2.25 inches. It is labor intensive to install and link all that rebar together before the concrete can be poured.

More steel and a lot of wood was needed to build the work bridge in the river and the supports and wooden falsework where the rebar is installed and concrete poured to build the new bridge. About 14 million pounds of steel was used to drive the piles supporting the work bridge and to support the wooden falsework use to form the bridge arches. The

amount of wood used on the work bridge and falsework exceeds 2 million board feet and includes 2-by-4's, 8-by-8's and many sheets of plywood.

The crew building the bridge used these materials to create the arches you now see spanning the river and the bridge supports and beams south of Franklin Boulevard.

On a side note, the web cam is operational again, check it out.

Posted byJyll Smith, ODOT PIO at2:39 PM

Wednesday, February 16th, 2011

*From ODOT - Avoiding impacts to basic services: Construction of the Willamette River Bridge involves ODOT, Hamilton Construction Company and subcontractors, yet many other entities are affected. The project site includes many utility services that our construction crews must be aware of: power lines, fiber optics communication lines, water lines, natural gas pipelines, local network copper and fiber optic cables, sewer lines, and overhead electric lines. Before construction begins, we carefully plan how to minimize potential service disruptions to local customers by ensuring that utility lines are relocated or carefully protected. On the Willamette River Bridge project, we've worked with the Eugene Water and Electric Board (EWEB), Springfield Utility Board, Williams Gas Pipeline, Qwest, Comcast, the City of Eugene, and the Metropolitan Wastewater Management Commission. We've collaborated with them to identify potential conflicts between current service locations and construction of the project. Throughout the project, once the conflicts are identified, we work with the utility companies to find a solution to relocate services. While most conflicts have been resolved at this point, coordination will continue through construction. We appreciate the cooperation of the service providers, which has helped us keep our project on schedule.*

Posted by Karl Wieseke, ODOT Construction Project Managerat11:31 AM

Friday, February 18th, 2011

## Box girder beam bridge construction

*From ODOT*- Arches, pier columns, precast beams, cast-in-place beams, decking and railing are all bridge components. When joined together, they link Interstate 5 across the Willamette River.

Joining the south bank of the Willamette to the freeway, the bridge is made up of support pier columns, box girder beams, a deck and railings. On some bridges, the beams are made off-site; however, the beams on these bridges are what we call cast-in-place beams.

Let me share the process of building the cast-in-place beams. Piles were first driven to support a steel platform for the wooden falsework. The falsework forms the outline of the beams just like a house foundation. Inside the wooden forms, reinforcing steel is tied together forming the floor, walls and roof of the beam. The floor is poured and cured, and then the sides and the top are constructed. The finished rectangular beams look solid but are actually hollow and are from 5 to 12 feet high and vary in length from 84 to 214 feet.

Then the deck is formed and poured on top of the beams, completing the bridge. Finally, all the supports and falsework are removed leaving the bridge standing on the pier columns.




Posted by Jyll Smith, ODOT PIO at 11:58 AM

Tuesday, February 22nd, 2011

## Wide range of skills needed to build bridges

*From ODOT*- It's clear to see that construction of the new Willamette River Bridges takes a large crew, but what type of job skills are needed?

The project's general contractor and subcontractors include a wide range of skilled workers:

- Carpenters build the work bridge and wooden falsework.
- Ironworkers lay and tie together miles of rebar.
- Assemblers and welders build the steel structures supporting the concrete forms and install scaffolding.
- Equipment operators operate the large cranes, drilling rigs, excavators, demolition equipment, forklifts and trucks used on site.
- Concrete workers pump and pour tons of concrete and complete the finishing work.

- Material handlers receive, store and distribute the materials needed, at just the right time, to keep the project on schedule.
- Safety personnel flag and direct traffic, put up and take down signs and barricades that keep you safe.
- Mechanics repair and service construction equipment.
- Engineers and surveyors verify and check the plans, make needed adjustments, and mark locations for bridge components.
- Landscape specialists move soil, install plantings and minimize erosion.
- Support personnel include managers, supervisors, secretaries and others who keep the project moving.

All of these talented workers play an important role in building beautiful bridges that are strong enough to carry traffic for the next 75 years.

Posted byJyll Smith, ODOT PIO at9:06 AM

Tuesday, March 1st, 2011

## ODOT Listens to Citizens

*From ODOT- As the ODOT Area Manager for Lane County, I see firsthand the benefits of community input on our various capital projects. The Willamette River bridge project is a great example of citizens working with ODOT to achieve results that meet the required standards, while reflecting local community values. The Citizen Advisory Group (CAG), made up of representatives of nearby neighborhoods, local jurisdictions, local organizations, and citizens at large has worked on the project since the early planning stages in 2007.The CAG provides a key link between the community and the project. Its members give feedback on issues ranging from bridge engineering, placement and appearance of sound walls, design enhancements and landscaping to the park paths and open spaces surrounding the project. They also assist in reaching out to stakeholder groups through open houses and public forums. The frequent dialogue between CAG members, ODOT and other key stakeholders is thoughtful and thorough; seeking consensus before moving forward. These volunteers contribute many hours to listen, learn and provide input. Their participation is invaluable and leads to a better community outcome. The success of the Willamette River Bridge project reflects the partnership between the CAG and ODOT. Everyone is focused on creating a lasting community asset. Thanks to all our local citizen stakeholders for their past and ongoing participation.*

Posted by Sonny Chickering, ODOT Area Managerat2:57 PM

Monday, March 7th, 2011

## The arches are done!

*From ODOT-*

The twin arches for the new southbound I-5 Willamette River Bridge are done. Next steps include installing the steel framework and wooden forms to pour the bridge deck.

One of the new southbound bridge arches stratches from the middle of the river to the south bank.

Construction work continues to connect the arch on the south bank to the bridge spanning Franklin Boulevard, the railroad tracks, and the I-5 southbound off-ramp to Franklin Boulevard

A new span connects the northern arch to I-5 southbound on the north bank of the river.

Posted byJyll Smith, ODOT PIO at2:02 PM

Tuesday, March 8th, 2011

## The first deck pour for the southbound bridge

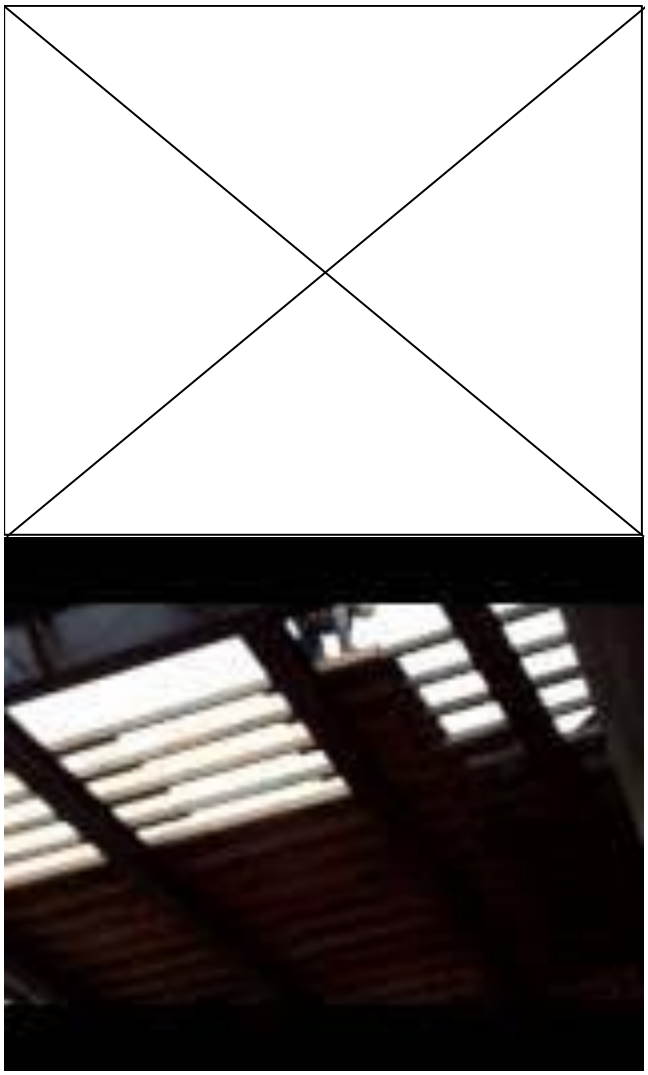
*From ODOT*- This past Friday was an exciting day on the project- it was the first of many deck pours. Contractors began pouring the concrete surface that motorists will drive on, completing the roadway and the surface that supports the future bridge rail. Crews are starting on the approach span on the north side of the new bridge. Next, they'll move to the south end of the project and work their way north.

We are using a new type of concrete that has less hazardous materials (silica) and is less expensive. For a good and durable surface, we need good weather conditions—not raining or too cold. Wind is also an issue. Our crews will use hand-held instruments to measure the wind conditions--evaporation rates must be continuously monitored.

The task is very labor intensive. Crews use a vibrating machine to consolidate the concrete and remove any air pockets and then a roller moves back and forth to level the concrete for a smooth ride.

The concrete is cured for 14 days. Crews help the process by laying down wet burlap and soaker hoses and covering the new deck with plastic. It's like a greenhouse to keep the concrete wet and warm enough to build required strength as it cures.

I was able to visit the project and took some video of the process. In addition to the equipment mentioned above, you will see the containment precautions used when transferring the concrete from the original trucks to the concrete pump truck. I learned that the contractor has to wet the wood forms before the concrete is poured so the wood doesn't stick to concrete when the forms are removed.



Posted by Jyll Smith, ODOT PIO at 10:29 AM

Friday, March 11th, 2011

## Arch completion photo story, part 1 of 3

*From ODOT*- Over the past few months, we've told you how the long-span arch ribs that will support the southbound Interstate 5 bridge over the Willamette River in Eugene and Springfield took shape section by section. Through a series of highly complex and technical

steps, tons of concrete and steel were transformed into a pair of arches that are both useful and elegant.

Here’s another close-up look at each step in the process, showing the various stages of the arch completion. This week, we'll start by taking you 50 feet underground for the first stage of the arch ribs construction.

In April 2010, crews had installed temporary falsework to form the arches as they were built. They started by erecting steel supports on the work bridge and welding them into place. On top of the steel supports, they built a wooden deck and forms that outlined the curve of the arches.

Rebar (reinforcing steel bars) creates the strength and shape of the concrete arches. Below, two crew members put the finishing touches on one of the rebar cages that form the arch.

After the cages were sealed off with plywood form work, workers began filling them with a mixed concrete “cocktail” that is capable of flowing like water so that it fills every nook and cranny within the arch reinforcement cages. See the photo below.

Posted by Jyll Smith, ODOT PIO at 2:10 PM

Wednesday, March 16th, 2011

## Protecting the Environment

*From ODOT* - The construction area for the Willamette River Bridge project has multiple environmentally and historically sensitive areas, including the Whilamut Natural Area, Mill Race Ruins, the river itself and its banks. We have taken many measures to protect these areas. Before construction, an inventory of the site documented wetlands, plant and animal species, and areas of historical importance. Fencing and markings have been placed identifying areas to be left undisturbed. During the design phase, bridge piers and other project features were located to avoid impacts as much as practical. Sometimes it was impossible to avoid impacting the protected resources. In these cases, we inventoried items carefully and submitted plans detailing the impacts and strategy for restoration and mitigation which were then approved by local, state and federal regulators before construction began. Environmental monitors conduct inspections to verify that we are meeting the permit requirements and identify any future needs. I am happy to report that we continue to receive positive comments and reviews. Once construction is complete, we will provide new vegetation and habitat, and improve the surrounding areas. Balancing the project need to protect and enhance environmentally and historically sensitive areas during construction requires a strong partnership between the community, ODOT, other State and Federal Agencies, local jurisdictions, and our contractors. We have a path forward. I believe when we are through we will be leaving the area better than we found it.

Posted by Karl Wieseke, ODOT Construction Project Manager at 1:57 PM

Thursday, March 17th, 2011

## Arch completion photo story, part 2 of 3

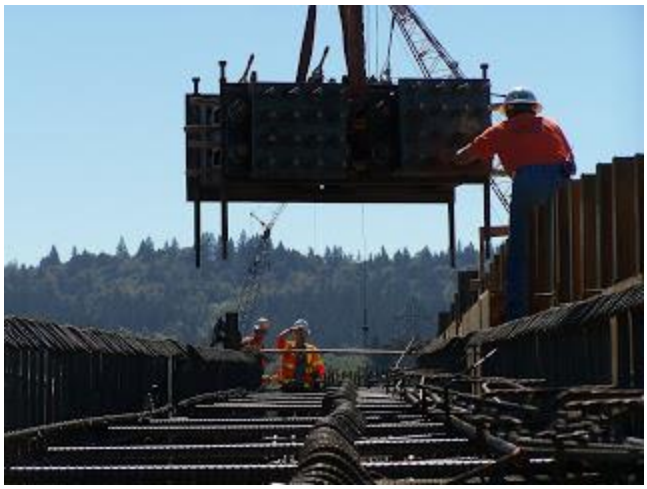
*From ODOT*- Last time, we reviewed how the arches are initially formed. Now, we'll describe how we went about lengthening them.

To minimize the impact on the Willamette River, the arch ribs will touch down only once in the water. Therefore, to span the wide and relatively shallow Willamette River, each arch must extend approximately 400 horizontal feet. The arches in the new bridge are fairly flat compared with those constructed during Roman times.

The arches will support the weight of the bridge by transferring the weight of the new bridge into shafts at either end of each arch. A "keystone" — a final insertion of concrete — ensures that the two sides of the arch transfer the force they bear outward, rather than collapsing in on each other.

To make way for the keystone pour, the crews left a 5 foot wide by 6 foot deep hole inside the crown of each arch. A crown reinforcement frame, seen below, creates a space to receive a steel-encased hydraulic ram capable of exerting the 965 tons of pressure necessary to jack the arch ribs apart.

Next, crews lowered a jacking box into the crown reinforcement frame at the center of each arch rib, as seen in the picture below. The team then activated the massive hydraulic ram, which pushed the arch ribs apart about two to three inches (a little goes a long way), lifting them off their false work and causing each rib to support its own weight. For the next step, crews poured concrete around the jacking box, casting it permanently into place with the job of supporting compression forces of 5.5 million pounds every second for the next 100 years.



Posted by Jyll Smith, ODOT PIO at 2:35 PM

Monday, March 21st, 2011

## Work Continues on Park Design Enhancements

*From ODOT- Located above a pristine natural area with major pedestrian paths connecting Eugene and Springfield, the Willamette River Bridge project is located in a unique setting. We have hired teams of artists to design enhancements that will improve areas near the pedestrian paths on the north and south banks of the river. The teams will finalize their designs this year. This is the latest step in years of planning to make sure the final bridge project fits in with its unique surroundings. The most extensive enhancements will be in the Whilamut Natural Area. They will be located along the park paths under Interstate 5 at Canoe Canal, on the north bank of the river and throughout the area just west of the bridges. Working with local stakeholders to better understand long-term maintenance issues, the artist team for this area will refine their initial concepts for approval. On the south bank, ODOT and the Design Enhancement Steering Committee members have decided to take another look at how best to use the limited space. The original design concepts were based on plans that have since changed, particularly those related to the realignment of the path on the south bank. In addition, we now know more about the required interpretative displays detailing the historic Eugene Millrace and the history of the Kalapuya Tribe's use of the area. Integrating those displays with other enhancements makes sense and will result in a better experience for path users. The DESC will clarify the impact of the changes and make recommendations on how to proceed. One thing is certain; the design enhancements will make using these paths even more enjoyable.*

*http://www.willamettebridge.org*

Posted by Sonny Chickering, ODOT Area Manager at 10:24 AM

Thursday, March 24th, 2011

## Arch completion photo story, Part 3 of 3

*From ODOT-*

In part 2 of our series, we showed you how the arches were jacked apart to support their own weight. We'll now explain the final step.

Even during a dusting of winter snow, crews remained hard at work. The photo above shows them preparing to pour concrete to close and connect the ribs using the same concrete cocktail of small aggregate and water reducers that was used for the reinforcement cages. After seven days, the concrete reached its intended strength and the falsework could be removed.

In January, once the arches could stand on their own, crews used cranes to dismantle the wooden forms and steel support system. All of the material is being saved and reused to build the arches for the northbound I-5 bridge.

With all the falsework now removed, the weight of the arches is fully supported by the large concrete shafts that were poured deep in the ground on either bank and in the middle of the river, revealing the beauty and grace of the new bridge yet to be.

Posted byJyll Smith, ODOT PIO at11:24 AM

Monday, March 28th, 2011

## A less noticed bridge across the Willamette

*From ODOT*- When the original Interstate 5 bridge was built in 1962, the contractor filled part of the river with rock, providing a platform to drive onto and build the bridge. We have since learned a great deal about the effects of construction on waterways and wildlife since then. Now, we strive to prevent or limit impacts.

This time, we built a work bridge across the river. It is more than two acres in size. The deck of the work bridge is 10 feet above the high water mark, protecting it from spring runoff. A drainage system catches all rain runoff and treats it before it is discharged into the river.

The work bridge supporting construction work and the new arches.

The bridge allows large cranes and other construction equipment to be positioned over the river during construction and demolition. During demolition of the original Willamette River Bridge, the work bridge captured all the debris, keeping it out of the river. The work bridge is also a platform in which to build the supports and falsework necessary to pour the arches and other bridge parts. Construction activity continues at all times with no effect on the river and wildlife.

Approximately 1.3 million board feet of lumber and 15 million pounds of steel were used to build the work bridge. Construction of the work bridge required driving 24-inch steel piles into the ground, connecting the piles with 36-inch steel beams, building a deck on top of the beams with large wooden 12-inch by 12-inch timbers, sealing with a plastic material, and covering with 1 1/8-inch thick plywood creating a smooth work surface. All the material will be recycled when the project is complete.

Posted byJyll Smith, ODOT PIO at2:39 PM

Wednesday, March 30th, 2011

## A trip down memory lane

*From ODOT-* As construction continues on the new Willamette River Bridge, take a trip down memory lane to remember the original bridge and how its construction helped pave the way for Oregon's interstate future nearly 50 years ago.

Before this link in the nation's north-south interstate highway system on the West Coast was built, drivers had to exit the unfinished interstate and navigate local streets through the Eugene-Springfield area before reconnecting with I-5.

As construction continues and milestones are met on the new bridge, we are excited to have received historic photos from former ODOT employee Kenneth Lodewick that show the construction of the original bridge and how it linked I-5 over the Willamette River. I hope you enjoy looking at these as much as I do.

*Construction of the original Willamette River Bridge circa 1960.*

*See more historic photos of this project here.*

Posted byJyll Smith, ODOT PIO at1:52 PM

Friday, April1st, 2011

## April 7 open house on proposed design enhancements

*From ODOT*-You're all invited to our open house planned for April 7, Eugene Public Library, 100 West 10th Ave., from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the Bascom-Tykeson meeting rooms. Five exciting proposals will be on display for design enhancements adjacent to Interstate 5 near the new Willamette River Bridge. Our goal is to create an awareness of the influence of the local Kalapuya Tribe and complement the theme of Whilamut Passage for travelers crossing the Willamette River. Each proposal represents a different approach to telling the area's story. I think you'll be intrigued by what each artist team proposed. Pictures, models and text descriptions will outline each proposal and all attendees will be given feedback forms so their thoughts on the proposals can be heard. A selection committee of local stakeholders will review the feedback as they reach consensus on a final recommendation. It will be great to meet our blog's readers and get the most feedback possible. ODOT will review the recommendation and make a final selection in May. In June our project engineer (OBEC) will finish the contract with the finalist to complete the design and prepare bid documents. Installation will be late in 2013 or early 2014, once the bridge project is complete. If you cannot attend in person, please go to our website at www.willamettebridge.org April 7 through April 13 to review the proposed designs.

Posted bySuzanne Roberts at1:37 PM

Tuesday, April 5th, 2011

## Innovative techniques to protect wildlife during construction

*From ODOT-* As important as the Interstate 5 Willamette River Bridge is to drivers, so is protecting habitats for local wildlife and safeguarding the river below.

During construction, we are required to protect fish populations from loud noise that can impact them or their communication and migratory patterns.

To muffle the noise from underwater pile driving, crews place a “bubbleator” in the water. The “bubbleator” is a custom-made foam oval protected by sheet metal. Aluminum pipes deliver 1,600 cubic feet of air per minute to froth the water during pile driving, creating a sound curtain to protect fish. Due to its large size, the frame of these devices also serves as a safe, sturdy work platform for crews during pile driving. Environmental consultants mount hydrophones and monitor the resulting noise from the curtain of bubbles.

Each time we prepare to drive piles, we must conduct hydro acoustic monitoring to make sure we continue to avoid harming fish. Thus far, each time has shown that the “bubbleator” maintains noise levels below required thresholds.

Crews will begin another round of hydro acoustic monitoring next week as they prepare to drive piles to support the new work bridge.

Hamilton Construction crews using a “bubbleator” to reduce noise impacts

to fish during pile driving for the new Willamette River Bridge.

Posted byJyll Smith, ODOT PIO at12:23 PM

Friday, April 8th, 2011

## Visit the artistic enhancement virtual open house!

*From ODOT-*

Did you miss the Willamette River Bridge open house last night? You have another opportunity to comment on the proposed artistic enhancements.

Visit the virtual open house to view the artistic design enhancement concepts and send us your comments. If the link does not open, please copy and paste this link in your browser: http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/HWY/REGION2/I-5WRB_OpenHouse_April2011.shtml

On the virtual open house webpage, you can view displays of the proposals as well as a video description of them. The proposals from each team represent their unique approach to creating awareness of the influence of the local Kalupuya Tribe and complement the Whilamut Passage theme. Later this month, a selection committee of location volunteers will consider your comments as they finalize a recommendation to the Community Advisory Group and Project Development Team. After a final decision in May, the chosen design team will prepare the final design. Installation of any enhancements is schedule for late 2013 or early 2014 when the new bridges are complete.

Encourage your friends to also visit the virtual open house. We need to receive your comments by noon Wednesday, April 13.


Posted by Jyll Smith, ODOT PIO at 11:27 AM

Thursday, April 14th, 2011

## A lot more bridge to see

*From ODOT*-If you have not been by the Willamette River Bridge project recently, make the time to do so. Even during the rain, snow, cold and windy conditions this winter and spring, a lot of progress was made. The graceful arches crossing the river are the most noticeable feature of the new southbound Interstate 5 bridge. But be sure to notice the steel supports and falsework from the north bank of the river to the south, where the new bridge joins I-5. Construction workers can now walk from the north to the south end of the bridge, above ground. Crews are forming and pouring the final support beams for the bridge deck. In preparation for paving the bridge deck, forms are built on top of the beams, and rebar is installed and tied. Already, portions of the deck have been poured on the north side of the river as well as sections on the south side joining I-5. Over the next couple of months, crews will pour the rest of the concrete to complete the deck on the south side of the river. The deck over the river, supported by the arches, is the largest pour and cannot take place until all the north and south portions of the deck are complete. With the arrival of spring and better weather, take time to look more closely at the new bridge from one of the pedestrian paths near the project. There's a lot more bridge to see! The southbound bridge is on schedule to open to traffic in early fall.

Posted by Suzanne Roberts at 9:20 AM

Friday, April 15th, 2011

## Where the aesthetics funds come from

*From ODOT-*

We understand the current economic environment leads to many questions about how public money is spent. It is often challenging to understand the restrictions placed on dedicated funding. Even within ODOT, frustrations are voiced when money targeted for modernization improvements can't be spent on pavement preservation. We have received questions about how the design enhancements are funded and would like to provide more information for you.

The Interstate 5 Willamette River Bridge will cost approximately $201 million to replace. The money comes from two funding sources: a state funding package called the Oregon Transportation Investment Act III, and a federal funding package called SAFETEA-LU, which stands for the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users.

These transportation funds were allocated in 2003 and 2005, respectively, specifically for this project; the money cannot be diverted to other projects or other uses. The federal SAFETEA-LU funding requires the Oregon Department of Transportation to build a bridge that is both functional and visually pleasing.

From the beginning of the design process, community members have told us that the location and size of this bridge warrant special attention and asked us to include design enhancements that complement the bridge and reflect its unique location.

Less than one percent of the total project budget was allocated for design enhancements and we plan to complete that work under budget. Approximately $50,000 of the design enhancement budget will be reserved to pay for ongoing maintenance.

Throughout the decision making process, the public has been represented by a Community Advisory Group, made up of members of key community organizations, such as neighborhood associations, the Citizen Planning Committee for the Whilamut Natural Area, and the Project Development Team, made up of representatives from ODOT, Lane County and the cities of Eugene and Springfield, and a CAG member.

We've worked with these groups to ensure the new bridges and their surroundings reflect community values and the natural beauty of the Willamette Valley and the river.

Community stakeholders continue to be involved in making decisions about the design enhancements for the project area. Later this month, a selection committee of local volunteers will consider your comments as they finalize a recommendation to the CAG and PDT, which will in turn make a recommendation to ODOT.

Posted byJyll Smith, ODOT PIO at2:19 PM

Wednesday, April 20th, 2011

## Local contractor builds a bridge and much more

*From ODOT*- Hamilton Construction, headquartered in Springfield, Ore., manages the construction of the new Willamette River Bridge for ODOT.

Hamilton is one of the many Oregon construction firms that have successfully bid on bridge projects funded by the Oregon Transportation Investment Act III.

Other OTIA III projects Hamilton has built for ODOT in Lane County include replacing the Interstate 5 McKenzie River bridges and several new bridges at the I-5 Goshen Interchange. They also worked on three additional projects further south on I-5. Hamilton is currently working on another complex OTIA III bridge project over the Sandy River on I-84 in Troutdale.

One of the unique things Hamilton has done for the Willamette River Bridge project was to develop an in-water device called a "bubbleator" to minimize the impact on fish by the vibrations caused by pile driving. For the Sandy River Bridge, they are innovating methods

to minimize the risk of flooding by reducing the amount of piers in the river and removing woody debris.

A key goal of the OTIA III program is to stimulate Oregon's economy through construction work, especially at the local level. For a project as large as this one, Hamilton coordinates more than 40 subcontractors that provide key services and supplies, all timed to meet a demanding schedule. Like Hamilton, the majority of the subcontractors are from the nearby area.

Founded in 1939 to build concrete roads and irrigation systems, Hamilton now specializes in building highway and railroad bridges throughout the western U.S., especially those over bodies of water or with difficult access.

With more than 70 years' experience, Hamilton is a partner ODOT can count on to build a project as complex as the Willamette River Bridge and to help meet the overall goals of the OTIA III program.

Posted byJyll Smith, ODOT PIO at4:23 PM

Friday, April 22nd, 2011

## Floating Past the Bridge Project

*From ODOT*- I am out on the Willamette River Bridge construction project a great deal, especially on the work bridge. Every time I cross the work bridge, I can't help but look up and down the river to see if boaters are floating by. Especially with warmer weather, it is not unusual to see people fishing or boating. Later in the spring and summer, others will just float the river on their inner tube to cool off on the hot days. If you boat or float near the Willamette River Bridge, please remember that you are in a construction zone and passing through requires more attention to be safe. If you enter the river east of the bridge and float under the bridge, signs in the river direct you to the correct channel and where to cross under the work bridge. Keeping to the right bank, or the north side of the river, is important to pass under the work bridge at the designated safe place. It might seem like you could pass under the work bridge in other locations. However, the combination of the current, pilings in the river, and trapped or floating debris in the river create additional hazards. For many of you, the arrival of spring means the chance to enjoy the river. We have marked a safe passage under the work bridge. Please use it and stay safe.

Signs point river users to the correct channel to safely pass under the bridge construction.

Posted by Karl Wieseke, ODOT Construction Project Managerat7:22 AM

Wednesday, April 27th, 2011

## South Bank of River to Include Interpretive Displays

*From ODOT- We work closely with our contractors to minimize the impact of construction on local historical features and to leave behind not only wonderful new bridges, but historical information about the area in which the bridges are located. The displays will be installed in late 2013 or early 2014.When the new bridges are completed, visitors to the south bank will see unique interpretive displays about Native American culture and the old Eugene Millrace. The first interpretative display reminds us that the Willamette Valley and surrounding foothills have a rich Native American heritage that has been mostly forgotten until recently. To provide more opportunities to understand the contribution of Native Americans, ODOT, in partnership with the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, will install the display on the river's south bank with information about the history and contributions of the first people to live and prosper in the valley. The second interpretive display comes from a federal requirement to protect and enhance Eugene's historic Millrace*

*ruins as part of the bridge replacement project. At one time, the Eugene Millrace diverted water from the river at an intake east of what is now the Willamette River Bridge to generate power to run many Eugene industries. While building the new bridge, we have preserved and exposed more of the original millrace. In addition, we worked with a historian to document the history of the millrace for future generations. Some of that history and information will be part of a permanent display for the public to enjoy when visiting the south bank.*

Posted by Sonny Chickering, ODOT Area Managerat4:09 PM

Monday, May 2nd, 2011

## Getting 'up close and personal' with the Willamette River Bridge project

*From ODOT-*

Many highway and bridge projects are easily visible as you drive by, but not so easy to see 'up close and personal.'

That is not the case with the Willamette River Bridge project. Located between two cities and surrounded by a park, hundreds of people see the project up close every day from the park paths and thousands more catch a glimpse as they drive by.

Did you know you can request an 'up close and personal' tour of the construction site and see the arches and current activities from the actual work bridge that you would not be able to see from anywhere else?

People who have already taken tours include local service clubs, senior groups, elected officials and students. They have made a number of comments about the complexity of the project, the amount of material required and the expertise of the contractors and workforce.

Taking a tour is the best way to see the progress being made and ask questions about the new bridges. The work is even more impressive when you can walk out near the construction and see it taking shape.

Tours are held the second Wednesday of each month at 10 a.m. and are limited to 15 people; pre-registration is required. Special group tours may be scheduled for other days and times based on the construction activity.

To schedule a tour, please call John Lively at 541-484-7052 or email: john@cawood.com.

Posted byJyll Smith, ODOT PIO at1:17 PM

Tuesday, May 3rd, 2011

## Can you spot the safety hazards?

*From ODOT-*

ODOT's top priority is safety—for both the traveling public and roadside workers. Because of Oregon's robust safety program, our contractor, Hamilton Construction, and its crews have worked 25,681 hours on this project without a time-loss injury.

While we always make safety our top priority, bridge construction sites of 50 years ago looked very different than those today.

Safety regulations and practices have come a long way since the construction of the original Interstate 5 Willamette River Bridge in 1961. Construction equipment, tools and techniques have improved safety and operations over the years. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations have helped to protect workers since 1970.

So let's take a trip in the time machine and go back 50 years.

Can you spot the hazards that would be modern OSHA violations in this historic construction photo of the original Willamette River Bridge?

Put your answers in the comment section of this post. We will reveal the answers on the blog next week. Good luck!

Posted by Jyll Smith, ODOT PIO at 3:59 PM

Friday, May 6th, 2011

## Visit our revamped website

*From ODOT-*

If you haven't visited our website recently, I encourage you to take a look: www.willamettebridge.org. We've made it easier to navigate and find information. And new content on the homepage gives you even more options to keep up on the bridge project.

If you want to learn more about why the bridge is being replaced, efforts to protect the environment or to read the quarterly newsletter, you'll find that and more. Using the top navigation bar you can find overview information, the project library and other resources.

The construction information is updated weekly, outlining the latest traffic changes, detours or delays. Boaters will find information on the correct river channel to use when navigating past the project. Park visitors will find tips on using the pedestrian paths in the project area. You can also get updates on design enhancements for the parks and surrounding areas.

We've added links to the latest blogs and ODOT's Twitter feed.

People use many different media today to access information. Our revamped website gives you a quick resource to a broad array of online tools.

Try it out and let us know what you think.

Posted by Jyll Smith, ODOT PIO at 9:15 AM

Thursday, May 12th, 2011

## Answers to safety hazards quiz

*From ODOT-*

Last week we asked if you could identify the hazards that would be modern OSHA violations in this historic construction photo of the original Willamette River Bridge. Congratulations to an anonymous commenter who identified several that we found plus pointed out additional hazards.

Please see below for answers.


1. All workers are wearing hard hats made of conductive material.

2. None of the workers is wearing a fall protection harness.

3. The workers are not wearing gloves during concrete placement.

4. There are no fire protection (“No Smoking”) signs near the fuel can.

5. There's no fire extinguisher in the area near fuel storage.

6. There's no guardrail at the leading edge of the deck.

7. Materials litter and block the walkway.

8. The scaffolding is not complete in the middle of the walkway.

9. The ladder is not 36 inches above the top of the wall.

10. The scaffolding is not compliant to current standards: It's not cleated, and the wrong grade of lumber is being used for the scaffolding planks.

11. There's no guardrail on the scaffolding.

12. The worker is not wearing hearing protection during concrete vibration.

13. The worker is smoking while working with concrete and near flammable fuel storage.

14. The workers are not wearing eye and face protection during concrete placement.

Bonus: There's no eye wash in the area during concrete placement.

Posted byJyll Smith, ODOT PIO at12:18 PM

Friday, May 13th, 2011

## A new blogger joins the team

*From ODOT-*

I hope everyone is able to get out and enjoy the sunshine today.

I'd like to welcome a new blogger to our team, Jim Cox, who has taken over for Ray Mabey as overall project manager for the I-5 Willamette River Bridge project. Ray has moved to another assignment within ODOT; we appreciate all of the accomplishments that were made under his leadership.

Jim is assistant branch manager for ODOT's Major Projects Branch, where he has worked for the past seven years. He had a leading role on the environmental assessment of the Interstate 5 Willamette River Bridge project that was completed in 2009. He also played a crucial role during our process to hire the contracting team, by evaluating proposals and negotiating the contract.

Jim has consistently served as the champion of ODOT's Context Sensitive and Sustainable Solutions initiative to improve the state transportation infrastructure while instilling a socially and environmentally responsible culture of sustainability.

Welcome Jim!

Posted byJyll Smith, ODOT PIO at3:02 PM

Tuesday, May 17th, 2011

## A nod to the bridge designers

*From ODOT-*

We have talked a lot about the construction of the new Interstate 5 Willamette River Bridge, but who is responsible for designing and engineering this graceful and significant structure?

The design team is led by OBEC Consulting Engineers, based in Eugene.

OBEC was created in 1966 as the design arm of Hamilton Construction, our main builder for this project. OBEC, then known as Oregon Bridge Engineering Company, and Hamilton originally performed design-build work for the timber industry. OBEC later separated from Hamilton in order to pursue a wider range of projects.

OBEC has engineered many bridges in the Eugene-Springfield area, including the structures in the Beltline Highway project, the Ferry Street Bridge project, the DeFazio Bridge, the Delta Ponds Pedestrian Bridge and the I-5 Gateway Pedestrian Bridge. OBEC also worked on the McKenzie River (Spores) to Goshen Grade project to repair two and replace five bridges between Coburg and Creswell.

To design the large Willamette River Bridge, OBEC teamed with 18 subcontractors, all but one of which is based in Oregon. They ranged from transportation planners and landscape architects to public involvement, geology, archaeology and environmental experts.

While their work on the major bridge design is largely complete, OBEC continues to participate in the design enhancement process and on any design or engineering refinements that need to be made during construction.

Posted byJyll Smith, ODOT PIO at1:10 PM

Thursday, May 19th, 2011

## Improving the Surrounding Area

*From ODOT- At ODOT, our commitment is to deliver the best long-term value for the dollars the public invests in highways and bridges. At the same time, we are committed to protect and improve the natural environments that surround our projects. This is especially true for the Willamette River Bridge project, which is surrounded by the Whilamut Natural Area, adjacent to the historic Eugene Millrace and of significance to the local history of the Kalapuya tribe. This unique location provides us an opportunity to improve the area we are working in. We will restore native grasslands and increase the number of native species trees. ODOT will water and maintain the landscape improvements for five years to help them survive. We will also restore and improve the flow of a creek on the river's south bank so fish can swim up and spawn in the creek. We're striving to avoid any damage to the ruins of the historic Eugene Millrace as we construct the new bridges. We've even removed overgrown plants to make more of the ruins visible. Information about the significance of the millrace will be displayed near the ruins when the project is complete. The completion of the Willamette River Bridge project will mean not only years of safe travel over the river for motorists, but also an enhanced natural environment and historical legacy surrounding the bridge for the local community to enjoy.*

Posted by Sonny Chickering, ODOT Area Managerat10:25 AM

Thursday, May 26th, 2011

## Improving the Surrounding Area

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Posted by Sonny Chickering, ODOT Area Managerat10:25 AM

Thursday, May 26th, 2011

## Post-tensioning the bridge

*From ODOT-* Driving by the Willamette River Bridge, you might have seen the contractor building the bridge's falsework and pouring the concrete for the new bridge. Other activities that are equally critical to completion of the bridge can't be easily seen.

One of the least seen and least understood activities is post-tensioning of beams and decks that make a bridge stronger than its concrete alone.

Post-tensioning allows the bridge to use longer spans with resulting in fewer support columns. Once post-tensioned, the bridge has the strength to meet the long-term demands of heavy traffic and to better resist an earthquake.

How do we post-tension the bridge? Crews place galvanized steel ducts and rebar in stemwall forms before placing the concrete. After the concrete cures, strands of steel cable (tendons) are anchored on one end of the deck and pulled through the ducts to the opposite side. Large hydraulic jacks attached to the free end stress the cables by pulling them to predetermined forces. Once tensioned, the cables are held in place with anchoring devices. The ducts are then filled with grout to prevent deterioration of the cable during the life of the bridge.

To understand the principles of post-tensioning, imagine a series of wooden blocks with holes drilled in them and a rubber band threaded through the holes. Fasten one end while you hold the other, letting the blocks sag. Now twist the rubber band, tightening the blocks together. When the rubber band is twisted and secured on both ends the blocks remain tight and strong.

On the new southbound Willamette River Bridge, one bridge section north and two bridge sections south of the river are post-tensioned. The deck supported by the two arches over the river is not a post-tensioned span. Instead, they are supported by the arches.

Posted by Karl Wieseke, ODOT Construction Project Managerat10:09 AM

Friday, May 27th, 2011

## Traffic unrestricted on Willamette River Bridge for holiday weekend

*From ODOT*- Memorial Day weekend marks the unofficial start of summer. Because of the holiday, traffic on the Willamette River Bridge will be unrestricted from noon Friday, May 27 through Monday, May 30.*Although actual roadwork will pause for the holiday, the work zone is still considered "active." Park path detours are still in effect and equipment is still in the area. Please remember to pay attention to the construction zone signs and to slow down and enjoy a safe trip. There are many standard safety tips to follow, and three of my favorites are:*

- *Obey the speed limit - remember that fines double in highway work zones.*
- *Wear your seatbelt - Oregon is joining traffic enforcement nationwide to reduce crashes, injuries and deaths on Oregon roads during the holiday weekend special Click It or Ticket safety campaign.*
- *Stay sober and alert - don't drink and drive or get into a vehicle with a driver who has been drinking.*

*ODOT urges everyone to drive carefully and plan for extra time that may be needed to reach destinations during the long weekend. Have a safe and fun holiday!*
Posted by John Livelyat7:39 AM

Tuesday, May 31st, 2011

Preparing for traffic to cross the new bridge

*From ODOT* - When the new southbound Interstate 5 Willamette River Bridge opens later this summer, it will temporarily carry all I-5 traffic until the new northbound bridge is completed.

In addition to completing the bridge, our focus is also now on the related improvements needed before traffic is switched over.

The original bridge had two southbound traffic lanes, with narrow shoulders that did not meet today's safety standards. The new southbound bridge will accommodate up to three traffic lanes and wider shoulders in its final configuration, with two lanes in each direction during construction of the new northbound bridge.

To connect the existing I-5 travel lanes with the new bridge, the lanes must be widened and the shoulders rebuilt. Then, new stripes must be added to both the lanes and shoulders to temporarily direct northbound and southbound traffic across the southbound bridge.

Work on the lanes north of the Willamette River Bridge is nearly complete. Contractors used reinforced concrete here for the travel lanes rather than asphalt, because concrete is more durable. Asphalt paving will be placed on the shoulders, finished with shoulder aggregate on the outside edges.

Other lane work remains before the new bridge opens to traffic. The lanes connecting the main span to I-5 south of Franklin Boulevard will also be widened and repaved. Rebuilding the traffic lanes on the north and south ends of the bridge is one of the final steps before opening.

Posted by Karl Wieseke, ODOT Construction Project Managerat7:48 AM

Friday, June 3rd, 2011

## Cyclists: Please slow down and respect all path users

*From ODOT-*

Better weather means more people using the pedestrian and bicycle paths near the construction of the Willamette River Bridge.

It's great to see so many of you enjoying the park and stopping to view the ongoing construction work. But as activity on the paths increases, there are more safety challenges for all.

The detour paths near the bridge work are designed for users to pass safely through the construction area with minimal slowdowns and construction conflicts.

We've observed some cyclists speeding in congested areas, which increases the risk of crashes and injuries. Please slow down and watch out for other path users to ensure everybody's safety.

The detour routes are not the final path configurations and will change by the time the bridge project is complete. The detour paths near the north end of the Knickerbocker Bridge are one example. The final alignment for the park paths is shown on the construction kiosks located throughout the park.

We are pleased with the construction progress on the bridges and look forward to the final path improvements. In the meantime, cyclists, please slow down as you pass through the park, enjoy the ride and stay safe.

Watch our public service announcement addressing path safety around the project.

Posted byJyll Smith, ODOT PIO at9:35 AM

Tuesday, June 7th, 2011

## Why replace the Willamette River Bridge?

*From ODOT*- Looking forward to upcoming project milestones provides a new opportunity to explain why the bridge is being replaced in the first place.

In 2002, our inspectors found sheer cracks in the original Interstate 5 bridge. Because of safety concerns, we immediately imposed weight limits, causing heavy-haul trucks to detour 200 miles through central Oregon. Based on the condition of the old bridge and current safety standards, ODOT determined that it was not feasible to simply repair it.

Building the temporary bridge in 2004 allowed heavy-haul traffic to once again use I-5 to cross the Willamette. However, the temporary bridge used materials and methods that could be installed quickly and does not meet environmental, design or seismic standards for permanent freeway bridges.

When completed, both new bridges will meet current safety standards, accommodate up to three lanes of traffic and have a design life of 100 years.

Posted by Jim Cox Assistant Manager, Major Projects Branchat3:51 PM

Monday, June 13th, 2011

## New webcast available

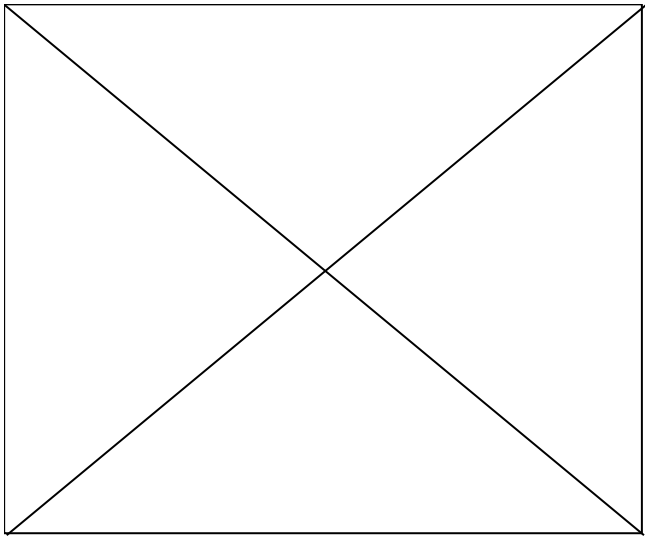
*From ODOT*- Just in time for summer, we have launched our third Interstate 5 Willamette River Bridge webcast showing you the latest construction work and what to expect in the next six months.

After viewing the webcast, you will have a better sense of the construction activity you see as you walk, run or bike through the Whilamut Natural Area.

The webcast also highlights how ODOT has collaborated with citizens and stakeholders since the beginning of the project. We want to keep the lines of communication open with you as construction continues.

As this webcast shows, the project blog and free site tours are the best ways to get a firsthand look at the bridge construction work. If you're interested in a personal tour of the bridge project, please call John Lively at (541) 484-7052 or email: john@cawood.com.

Enjoy!



Posted byJyll Smith, ODOT PIO at4:40 PM

Friday, June 17th, 2011

## Sound wall design, landscape combine to reflect natural features

*From ODOT*- While Laurel Hill Valley neighbors have enjoyed the "quieter" benefits of their new sound wall since December, work on the landscaping continues.

Recently, crews installed topsoil and an irrigation system that will support an attractive

landscape of plants that are native to the area.

To place the topsoil, crews closed the western shoulder of the southbound Interstate 5 on-ramp from Franklin Boulevard and pumped soil over the wall.

Landscape planting will take place on both sides of the wall, using several native plant species depending on expected height and coverage.

When the bridge project is done in 2014, neighbors and drivers alike will see an attractive blend of native vegetation and sculptured wall forms representing natural features found in the area.

Thanks to the great input and cooperation of the Laurel Hill Valley neighbors, the sound wall will be more than just a noise barrier between homes and the freeway. The blend of the design enhancements and native plants will reflect the local geology, and historic landscape of the southern Willamette Valley.

Posted byJyll Smith, ODOT PIO at1:36 PM

Wednesday, June 22, 2011

## Exploring possibilities for the south bank

*From ODOT-*

Citizen volunteers, along with representatives of ODOT, Hamilton Construction and Cameron McCarthy Landscape Architecture and Planning, recently toured the south bank of the Willamette River, just west of current bridge construction. The purpose of the tour was to better understand potential opportunities to combine required interpretive displays about the historic Eugene millrace and tribal heritage with additional design enhancements planned for the area.

What the group discovered are some great viewing locations where you can see the river, the historic Eugene millrace ruins and the freeway bridge. They also gained a greater appreciation and understanding of the existing natural environment and how landscaping plans will complement it with native plants. Several important opportunity areas were identified along with a list of potential enhancements. A key focus is to enhance the experience of those who will use the new south bank viaduct path in the future.

Plans are now under way to select the best locations, integrate interpretive displays with potential new design enhancements, and install the improvements in early 2014 when bridge construction is complete.

Posted byJyll Smith, ODOT PIO at11:15 AM

Friday, June 24th, 2011

## Highways, Bridges and Railroads - It's complicated

*From ODOT-*

The Willamette River Bridge is ODOT's largest bridge replacement project and one of the most complex, given neighboring natural areas, pedestrian paths and local vehicle traffic. For example, the bridge from the north to the south crosses the Canoe Canal, local walking and bike paths, the river,

Removing an old freeway bridge and building a new one over an active railroad requires close coordination with Union Pacific, a privately owned company. Extensive plans, including timing of events, construction and demolition details and potential risks, were submitted and approved in advance by the railroad company. Movement back and forth across the railroad and its 25-foot buffer zone is only allowed when a railroad company flagger is on the site. In addition, overhead work is timed to minimize any risk to passing trains.

*Franklin Boulevard and the Union Pacific Railroad tracks.*

When completed, the bridge over the tracks will include special roadside fencing to protect the trains and tracks below from falling objects.

Work begins late this year to demolish the temporary bridge and construct the new northbound bridge. Close coordination with the railroad will be a key focus then, as well.

Posted by Karl Wieseke, ODOT Construction Project Managerat6:38 AM

Wednesday, June 29th, 2011

## Cranes over the Willamette River Bridge

*From ODOT-*

Building the new Willamette River Bridge requires a variety of equipment. The site is crowded with machinery, including wheelbarrows, dump trucks and all sizes of cranes. The most visible are the cranes.

The number of cranes on the site at any given time varies from three to six and on occasion there are even more. They lift material – steel beams, wood of all kinds, rebar and concrete – from the ground or the work bridge to the point needed on the project. The operators often can't see where the material is to be set down. Instead, they rely on spotters who communicate with them by radio to position the load. A key focus is always safety for those above or below the load.

It’s challenging to position the cranes where they are needed. The river, Franklin Boulevard, Interstate 5 on- and off-ramps, protected wetlands and railroad tracks all run through the project. Moving the cranes to new locations requires careful planning to choose the route with the fewest disruptions to the public.

The use of cranes greatly diminishes the time and cost to complete the Willamette River Bridge and other bridges throughout the state.

The next time you are traveling the Oregon coast, imagine building the Rocky Creek Bridge, which spans a small gorge on Otter Crest, in 1927 or the Cape Creek Bridge, located at Heceta Head Lighthouse Scenic Viewpoint, in 1932 without modern-day cranes.

Posted byJyll Smith, ODOT PIO at4:03 PM

Friday, July 1st, 2011

## Preserving the Historic Eugene Millrace

*From ODOT- Building a bridge located between two communities and natural areas is quite a challenge. For the Willamette River Bridge project, an additional challenge is avoiding impacts to the historic Eugene millrace.*

*Some remnants of the Eugene millrace can be seen in the river east of the bridge. Portions of the channel are visible under the bridge and along the river on the south bank. Seeing any remains on the river bank is difficult due to vegetation.*

*Before building the new southbound bridge, we mapped the remnants of the old millrace and made plans to avoid damage and restore any areas affected by construction. We hired a historian to document the millrace; this information will be incorporated into an interpretative display on the south bank.*

*From the time the millrace was first constructed in 1851 by Hilyard Shaw, it supported economic development and recreation in Eugene. Water from the millrace provided power for lumber and flour mills, a produce cannery, sash and door factory, cider and vinegar plant, furniture factory, a distillery and other facilities. Recreational uses included boating and floating parades in the summer and ice skating when frozen in the winter. Some well-known University of Oregon student activities took place on the millrace. The millrace was last used for manufacturing around 1928. Floods in the 1940's destroyed much of the original structure, diminishing any long-term use.*

*I've enjoyed learning more about the history and significance of the Eugene Millrace. We look forward to adding to the historical record through a display for those who visit. The next time you are on the south bank path, look toward the river, and you will likely see some of the millrace ruins.*

Posted by Sonny Chickering, ODOT Area Managerat10:07 AM

Tuesday, July 5th, 2011

## Removing the falsework

*From ODOT-*

After building and installing the steel and wooden falsework structure needed to build the new southbound Willamette River Bridge for almost two years, the crew is now busy taking it down, a clear sign the bridge is nearly complete. Driving past the project, you will see portions of the bridge standing free, without any construction supports.

*New bridge exposed south of Franklin Boulevard.*

Removing the falsework requires careful attention to safety. Crews work overhead to disassemble the falsework, lower it to the ground and move it to storage areas. They have to watch for other workers on the site, as well as people, cars and trains that pass underneath.

To safely remove overhead falsework, we closed the Interstate 5 northbound off-ramp to Franklin Boulevard and Franklin Boulevard under the bridge in mid-June. We appreciate your continuing patience when future work closures are needed.

*Bridge falsework over Franklin Boulevard.*

As the falsework is removed, we are taking care to preserve as much material as possible, storing it on or near the site, so it can be reused to build the northbound Willamette River Bridge.

Posted byJyll Smith, ODOT PIO at11:35 AM

Thursday, July 7th, 2011

## Nation's top highway official tours Willamette River Bridge project

*From ODOT-*
Yesterday was an exciting day for ODOT as Federal Highway Administrator Victor Mendez toured the Willamette River Bridge project with ODOT Director Matthew Garrett.

Through its Every Day Counts initiative, the Federal Highway Administration is showing agencies how to make the most of limited funding by delivering projects as cost-effectively as possible. FHWA is sharing ways state DOTs can use technology and innovation to shorten project delivery, improve highway safety and protect the environment.

The Willamette River Bridge is a perfect illustration of the kind of environmental and project streamlining outlined in the Every Day Counts initiative.

Thanks to the construction manager/general contractor delivery method, a first for ODOT, we were able to begin construction two years earlier than if we had used traditional design-bid-build contracting.

On top of that, we collaborated with environmental regulators to complete portions of the environmental permitting on this bridge in only 30 days — using traditional permitting methods could have taken up to 145 days.

In his opening remarks, Director Garrett noted that the Willamette River Bridge project is a shining example of our environmental programmatic permitting process, which was established at the start of the bridge program in 2003.

We greatly appreciate this visit by Administrator Mendez and his recognition of our project for using innovations in contracting and permitting that save costs and time, while building a safe and attractive bridge.

*FHWA Administrator Mendez (center) touring*
*The Willamette River Bridge project.*

Posted byJyll Smith, ODOT PIO at11:41 AM

Monday, July 11th, 2011

## The inside story

*From ODOT-*

Don't have time to take a tour of the Willamette River Bridge project, but would like to learn more? You're in luck. A representative of ODOT and our contractor Hamilton Construction regularly make presentations to local organizations, including Rotary Clubs, school classes, chambers of commerce and senior groups.

A presentation typically includes an overview of project history, costs, current schedule and important milestones. A slide presentation documents work and shows aspects that would be difficult to see on a tour. Presentations can be tailored to your specific interest and available time. Best of all, the team will answer all of your questions.

We want to keep people informed and seek input on the project. The new bridge is a long-term investment in our highway infrastructure and a lasting legacy to Oregonians - especially to the communities of Eugene and Springfield.

I invite you to take advantage of this opportunity. Contact John Lively at (541) 484-7052 or email at john@cawood.com to schedule a presentation.

Posted byJyll Smith, ODOT PIO at2:50 PM

Wednesday, July 13th, 2011

## Check out our newsletter

*From ODOT-*

If you haven't done so, I encourage you to read our spring newsletter. It describes the latest construction progress and the key milestones we'll achieve in the near future. It also contains some delightful pictures of second-graders who recently toured our project site.

We publish a newsletter four times a year to update you on construction progress, design enhancements and mobility and safety notices. The newsletter also describes our public involvement activities and upcoming opportunities to stay engaged.

We distribute the newsletter to more than 975 interested readers. We enjoy sharing status updates and pictures of the project from the unique vantage points of the construction crews.

Past newsletters are available in the library section of our project website.

To subscribe to the newsletter, please contact Nichole Hayward at (541) 484-7052 or nichole@cawood.com. We send the newsletter by email unless you ask for a printed copy. Our newsletter is also available in alternative formats by special request.

Posted byJyll Smith, ODOT PIO at1:23 PM

Tuesday, July 19th, 2011

## Veneta second-graders see Willamette River Bridge work, up close

*From ODOT-*

We recently hosted some very special visitors here at the Willamette River Bridge site.

Two classes of Veneta Elementary School second-graders, their teachers and a handful of parent chaperones capped their "day of science" here to see firsthand how a bridge is built. They were thrilled to be escorted by Hamilton Construction's traffic control truck, with lights flashing, to the north staging area of the work zone.

The students walked out on the Knickerbocker bike-pedestrian bridge where they learned the sequence of building bridges. They also learned about some of the project's environmental and park improvements. The children were amazed at the size of the bridge, even from the distant vantage point on the Knickerbocker Bridge.

Upon arrival at the staging area, I led the students through safety protocols and let them suit up in adult-size reflective vests, hardhats and safety glasses. They also got an up-close look at one of the cranes and stood in awe of its wheels, which were taller than their teachers.

The last session was a lesson on concrete. We told our audience that the cement truck process was similar to mixing a cake, an analogy that drew laughs from the students. The group also reviewed the essential elements of construction: labor, materials, equipment and know-how.

The field trip was exciting for the students and rewarding to all of us building the bridge. We made them promise to come back and visit when they are fourth-graders so they can see how things have changed.

*Students trying on safety equipment as part of their bridge-building lesson.*

*Students learning how concrete becomes part of the bridge.*

Posted by Karl Wieseke, ODOT Construction Project Managerat7:18 AM

Friday, July 22nd, 2011

## The I-5 Willamette River Bridge: a sound investment

*From ODOT-*

The budget to replace the Interstate 5 Willamette River Bridge is $204 million. That makes it the largest bridge replacement project in ODOT's history. Roughly $157 million is for construction and the remainder covers environmental assessments, traffic studies and engineering services. The new bridges, which are designed to last 100 years, provide a great return on the publics' investment.

Most of the funds for the new bridges come from the third installment of the Oregon Transportation Investment Act, adopted by the Legislature in 2003. The OTIA III State Bridge Delivery Program dedicated $1.3 billion to repair or replace hundreds of aging state highway bridges in Oregon, including the Willamette River Bridge.

Another critical part of the overall funding package is $30.2 million of federal transportation funds obtained through the efforts of U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio for the project. Federal funds provide for construction, including a portion dedicated to design enhancements for the new bridges.

Besides improving our transportation infrastructure, highway and bridge construction supports local jobs. Did you know that every $1 million invested in transportation construction sustains about 11 family-wage jobs? There are more than 50 contractors and subcontractors working on the Willamette River Bridge project from Oregon and southwest Washington. The majority of the subcontractors are from Lane County and the surrounding area.

Posted byJyll Smith, ODOT PIO at7:46 AM

Friday, July 22nd, 2011

## River closure

*From ODOT-*

The weekend forecast is showing the potential for temperatures in the upper 80s. After all the cool weather this summer the heat will likely feel good and people will head out with their boats, rafts and inner tubes to float down the Willamette River.

Remember: the Oregon State Marine Board closed the Willamette River to boaters and other river users from the west D Street boat ramp downstream past the bridge construction. The closure remains in effect through Oct. 31 and is for your safety due to high water, debris and the construction project.

Posted byJyll Smith, ODOT PIO at1:40 PM

Wednesday, July 27th, 2011

## Canoe Canal Path under Interstate 5 will close for most of August

*From ODOT*-We'll be closing the Canoe Canal Path under Interstate 5 for bridge construction Aug. 1--26. You'll be detoured onto the North Bank Path to travel east and west under I-5. Bicyclists and pedestrians should expect brief delays and follow detour signs and directions from flaggers in the construction zone. During the path closure, our crews will lower the walls on the canal and make other path improvements. Other park path detours will be needed later. An east-west path through the park will always be open during construction, but flagger-controlled delays may occur. Thank you for your continued

patience as we work to complete this job as quickly as possible!


Posted by Suzanne Roberts at 10:41 AM

Thursday, July 28th, 2011

## You're invited to the southbound bridge opening

*From ODOT-*

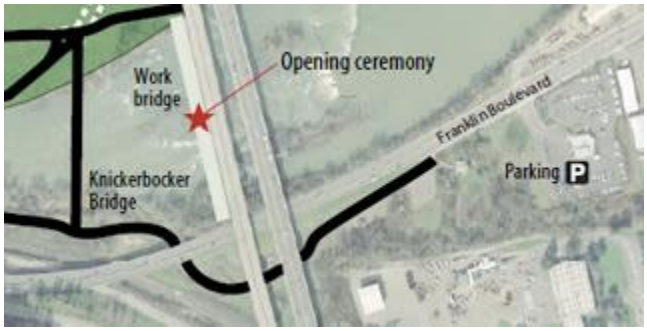
It's been two years since we dug golden shovels into the ground to commemorate the start of construction for this momentous project, and we are now ready to celebrate a huge milestone — the opening of the new southbound Interstate 5 bridge.

Please join us in celebration at 10 a.m. Thursday, Aug. 18, at the Willamette River Bridge.

U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio, local elected officials and other distinguished guests will be there. After a brief ceremony, you'll have the opportunity to tour the bridge — including a walk on the new bridge deck — before it opens to traffic in late August.

Our construction staff will conduct the tours. **To join a tour, you will need to wear closed-toe shoes and plan on walking for about one hour.**

The ceremony is on the work bridge located under the new bridge. Parking is available at the University of Oregon Motor Pool at 3233 Franklin Blvd. (see map below). Please allow 20 minutes to walk to the ceremony by following the signs. A courtesy shuttle will be available upon request at the lot.




Posted by Jyll Smith, ODOT PIO at 2:01 PM

Saturday, July 30th, 2011

## What's in a name?

*From ODOT*- Local citizens have been working to get support for naming the new Interstate 5, Willamette River Bridge.

The name Whilamut Passage (pronounced "WHEEL-a-moot") is the theme of the project and guides the design enhancements surrounding the bridge. The theme recognizes the unique setting of the bridge in the Whilamut Natural Area, a place of historic and environmental significance. The setting is also a transportation hub of bicycle, pedestrian, rail, waterway, and highway traffic. To the Kalapuya, Whilamut means, "Where the river ripples and runs fast."

Local citizens have already accomplished many of the steps required for naming the bridge. They've received support from Lane County, the cities of Springfield and Eugene, and the Metropolitan Policy Committee. The Oregon Geographic Names Board approved of the name on June 25.

Because the name honors the Kalapuya, the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde must also support it. Once this step is complete, the proposal will go to ODOT Region 2 for final approval. The Willamette River Bridge Community Advisory Group has also endorsed the Whilamut Passage name, and ODOT greatly appreciates the time and energy these volunteers are putting into a bridge that means so much to the community.
Posted by Sonny Chickering, ODOT Area Managerat11:44 AM

Wednesday, August 3rd, 2011

## Franklin Boulevard to close this weekend

*From ODOT-*
Franklin Boulevard under Interstate 5 between Eugene and Glenwood will be closed from 8 p.m. Friday, Aug. 5 until 5 a.m. Monday, Aug. 8.

The weekend closure will allow our crews to remove wooden falsework used to construct the new southbound I-5 bridge as it passes over Franklin Boulevard. This gets us one step closer to the finish line!

Signs will direct Franklin Boulevard traffic to detours using I-5.

- Westbound Franklin Boulevard traffic: take Glenwood Boulevard to I-5 northbound; then take exit 192 to Franklin Boulevard.
- Eastbound Franklin Boulevard traffic: take the on-ramp to southbound I-5, drive south to Glenwood Boulevard exit 191, drive north on Glenwood Boulevard to Franklin Boulevard.

The bicycle path underneath Franklin Boulevard will remain open, controlled by flaggers, during this work.

We appreciate your patience during this temporary traffic disruption.

For real-time traffic information, please visit www.TripCheck.com.

Posted byJyll Smith, ODOT PIO at3:44 PM

Monday, August 8th, 2011

## Southbound Willamette River Bridge nearly done

*From ODOT-*

You'll soon have a unique opportunity to walk across the new southbound Interstate 5 Willamette River Bridge at the Aug. 18 opening event.

It will be a once-in-a-lifetime chance to see the river views from the shiny new bridge at a human scale and pace rather than at highway speeds.

Below are photos of the bridge deck, showing final preparations under way.


Workers placed and hand-tied tied tons of steel reinforcing before pouring and smoothing the concrete to create a strong yet flexible bridge deck.


Crew members prepare to join a new section of bridge deck, at right, to one that was formed and poured earlier, at left.


The newly paved asphalt shoulder contrasts sharply with the shiny white concrete of the southbound bridge. The cranes in the background mark where the main span crosses the river.

The new southbound bridge is wide enough to be striped to temporarily carry both directions of freeway traffic as the new northbound bridge is built. From a bird's-eye view, you can see the gentle curve of the new southbound bridge. The temporary I-5 bridge is to the right.


The new bridge sports a strong steel railing that will allow drivers a view of the river below.

Posted byJyll Smith, ODOT PIO at12:40 PM

Thursday, August 11th, 2011

## Special railing, fencing to protect drivers, railroad

*From ODOT-*

The new southbound Willamette River Bridge opens to traffic in late August. Special safety features will be visible to those traveling over or under the new bridge.

On the main span, unlike the usual concrete barriers on the sides of the bridges, the Willamette River Bridge will have special safety railing that will allow motorists on top of the bridge a view of the river below. The black, three-tube railing runs the length of the bridge over the river and connects to concrete barriers at each end.

Workers put the finishing touch - shiny black paint - on the new railing.

Safety measures are also required where the new southbound bridge passes over the railroad tracks that parallel Franklin Boulevard. There, crews installed protective fencing on top of the bridge's concrete barrier. This fencing includes solid metal on the lower portion with open wire fencing on top. It is designed to stop debris from the roadway above from landing on the tracks or passing trains below.


At the south end of the new Willamette River Bridge, special fencing on top of the concrete barrier protects the railroad tracks below.

Posted byJyll Smith, ODOT PIO at1:54 PM

Wednesday, August 17th, 2011

## Please join our celebration and bridge walking tour on Thursday!

*From ODOT-*

The new southbound bridge will open to traffic by the end of the month. We are celebrating the halfway point of this exciting project and would love to meet our neighbors, who have been so supportive through it all.

Please join us on the work bridge at 10 a.m. Thursday, Aug. 18. U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio, state Rep. Terry Beyer, ODOT managers, local elected officials and other distinguished guests will be there to celebrate the significance this bridge replacement has to the region.

Don't miss a once-in-a-lifetime experience to walk across the southbound I-5 bridge before it opens to traffic. We'll provide a guided walking tour of the bridge, after the official ceremony. You'll be able to enjoy the views from the new I-5 bridge at a slower pace rather than at highway speeds.

Because the walking tour will be in an active work zone, we ask that you be prepared for some physical challenges and take necessary safety precautions.

- The walking tour distance traveled will be about one mile and is expected to take one hour.
- You must be physically able to walk unassisted up a steep, rocky slope from the work bridge to the top of the new bridge.
- We will walk the span of the new bridge and down a construction staircase to the South Bank Path. The staircase is five flights, or about 50 feet high.
- You MUST wear sturdy, closed-toe shoes, and pants are recommended. This is due to walking on rocky terrain, through an active work area, and on the tall, open staircase.

Parking is available at the University of Oregon Motor Pool at 3233 Franklin Blvd. Bicycle parking is also there, but please bring your own lock. Allow 20 minutes to walk to the celebration on the work bridge, or a shuttle will carry those who need it.

See you Thursday morning!

Posted byJyll Smith, ODOT PIO at10:31 AM

Tuesday, August 23rd, 2011

## What a day!

*From ODOT-*

What a thrill it was to see so many of you at our southbound bridge opening event! We were elated to see over 150 people last Thursday and share this milestone celebration, only a week after the project's two-year anniversary.

It's rare to see an interstate bridge empty of cars. It's an even more unusual to see people, children and dogs strolling across one at a leisurely pace. Yet this is exactly what happened.

But first, we heard interesting and informative speeches from federal, state and local officials.

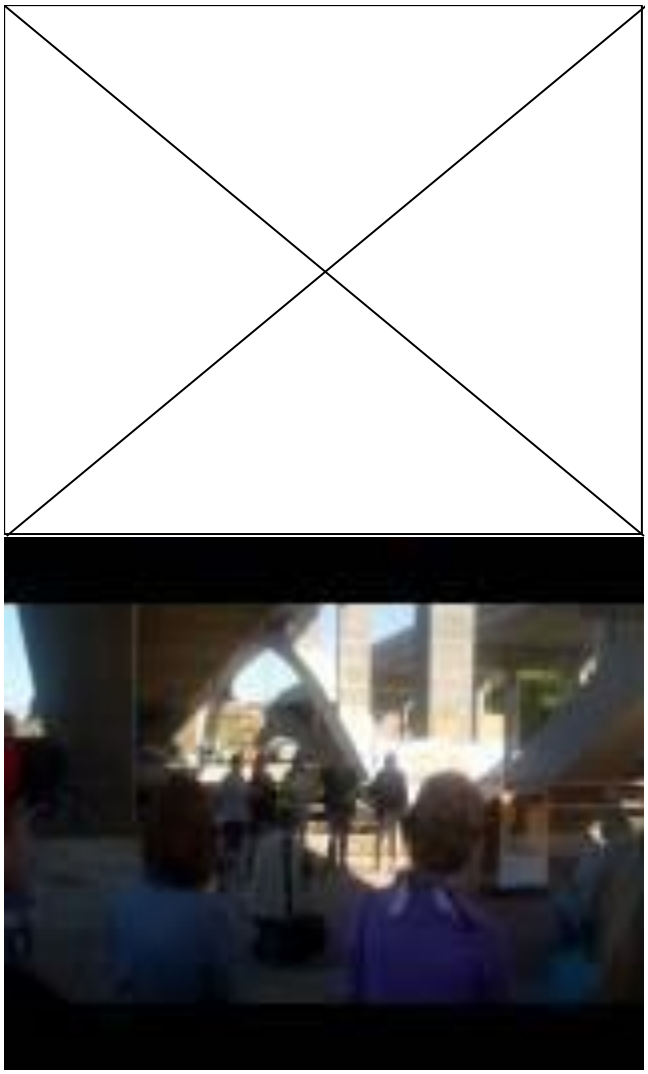
U.S. Rep. DeFazio looked to the future of the Willamette River Bridge project. “When this bridge is complete, it will facilitate the movement of the next four to five generations of I-5 users,” said DeFazio. “That’s a great achievement.” He also praised the large number of jobs that this project has created. State Rep. Terry Beyer expanded on this point, highlighting the economic benefits throughout the state.

While they couldn’t be here in person, U.S. Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley sent written statements read during the ceremony.

Springfield Mayor Christine Lundberg and Eugene Councilor Alan Zelenka talked about the benefits of the project they are already seeing both in the parks and in the local economy.

Esther Stutzman, representative of the Kalapuya tribe, led her daughters in a welcome song. She then talked about the significance of this area to the Kalapuya, the Native Americans who have lived in this stretch of the Willamette Valley for more than 10,000 years.

David Lewis, a representative of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, talked about the design enhancements. “I’m so happy I’ve been able to contribute to bringing back the spirit of our people to this place,” he said. “This project is giving us the opportunity to share the legacy of our ancestors.”



Esther Stutzman leads her daughters in a Kalapuya welcome song.

The tour of the new bridge.

U.S. Rep. DeFazio speaking to the crowd.

Posted byJyll Smith, ODOT PIO at3:24 PM

Monday, August 29th, 2011

## Ready, set, traffic switch!

*From ODOT-*

Tonight we will switch half of Interstate 5 traffic to the new southbound Willamette River Bridge!

Southbound freeway drivers may experience brief delays as crews move concrete barriers and safety barrels to guide traffic onto the new bridge.

To minimize the traffic impacts, workers will do the lane shifts during nighttime hours.

Northbound traffic will be shifted to share the new bridge later in October. Then we'll focus on removing the temporary bridge and building a new northbound span.

Thanks for your patience with the traffic changes!

Posted byJyll Smith, ODOT PIO at4:01 PM

Tuesday, September 6th, 2011

## Improving park paths while building a new bridge

*From ODOT-*

Before construction even began on the new Willamette River Bridge, ODOT, Eugene Parks and Open Space, Willamalane Park and Recreation District and the Citizens Planning Committee jointly developed plans to improve the pedestrian paths in and around the construction site. These improvements are part of an agreement among the agencies that allows the park to be used for staging and construction activity.

If you travel the paths in the Whilamut Natural Area, you will see that some changes are already complete. Other path improvements will be finished by 2014.

Here's what you'll notice now:

• A realigned Canoe Canal Path under Interstate 5 to eliminate a blind curve and create a new connection to Walnut Road in the Eastgate Woodlands. The original path dangerously combined the hard and soft path under the Walnut Road Bridge.

• Replacement of the hard path surface with a new soft path that will eventually connect to Pre's Trail on the west.

• New stairs from Walnut Road to the soft path as it crosses under the bridge. This has increased safety and a created easier access for path users.

• Enhancements to the area directly under the Walnut Road Bridge, including landscaping features to create a park-like setting for stopping and enjoying the Canoe Canal.

If you are in the Whilamut Natural Area, take the time to enjoy these changes made through the cooperation of ODOT and our local partners.

Posted byJyll Smith, ODOT PIO at3:36 PM

Thursday, September 8th, 2011

## Enhancing the Canoe Canal

*From ODOT-*

Built in 1974 for recreational boating, the Canoe Canal is more than two miles long. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife regularly stocks it with legal-sized rainbow trout, making it a favorite fishing spot for many local residents. Pedestrian path users enjoy the meandering waterway, as well as the abundance of wildlife that it supports.

Until now, the canal under Interstate 5 has been contained in a large concrete culvert with

high sidewalls that blocked the view of the water below. As part of the Willamette River Bridge project, our contractors are lowering both sides of Canoe Canal to increase visibility.

They removed the first four feet of the walls and installed new anchors to hold the remaining wall. When completed, the area around the canal will be landscaped to include special design enhancements, beautifying the surroundings for people who walk, run or ride nearby.

The Canoe Canal waterway connects to the Willamette River east of I-5 through Alton Baker Park, returning to the river downstream near the Ferry Street Bridge.

The Canoe Canal before we removed the walls.

You can see how much of the walls have been removed so far.

Posted byJyll Smith, ODOT PIO at4:05 PM

Wednesday, September 14th, 2011

## Why are those big boards going up on the beautiful new bridge?

*From ODOT-*

We continue to receive positive feedback about the new southbound bridge, especially the three-tube railing that allows travelers to see the river.

However, bridge users will notice the return of “gawk boards” to the east side of the bridge railing that will temporarily block the view during upcoming construction work.

Our contractor is installing “gawk boards” before demolishing the temporary bridge and building the new northbound bridge. The “gawk boards” provide for the safety of those traveling across the bridge and were also used during construction of the southbound bridge.

All of us are familiar with driving on the freeway and being unexpectedly slowed by travelers gawking at something along the road. This unexpected slowing increases the potential for major crashes involving multiple vehicles. The “gawk boards” will block views of the construction activity on the new bridge and decrease the risk of traffic slowing down to look.

The boards will also help protect the workers below from loose objects falling on them from vehicles crossing the bridge.

For your safety and that of the workers below, the “gawk boards” will stay up until construction of the new northbound bridge is complete, and traffic is using both of the new bridges.

Posted byJyll Smith, ODOT PIO at10:53 AM

Tuesday, September 20th, 2011

## No Climbing of the Arches

*From ODOT-*

The graceful appearance of the arches on the new southbound Willamette River Bridge is in stark contrast to the multiple columns still remaining from the detour bridge. The remaining columns will be removed during demolition of the detour bridge, scheduled to begin in October. Then, the advantage of the single touchdown point of the arches in the river will become more recognizable.

The arch design decreases the impact of multiple bridge columns on the river environment, but creates a new safety issue. The old bridge's support columns were vertical, smooth and almost impossible for a person to scale. The gentle slope of the new arches now provides an inviting temptation for daredevils to climb over the river from either bank.

When passing by the new bridge on the nearby paths, you might notice what we have done to discourage climbing on the arches. Our contractor crews built tall walls between the arch and the adjacent spandrel column to block access. In addition, crews poured a lid on top of each wall to prevent debris from falling into the enclosure created by the walls.

The design of the walls included the use of concrete form liners and are an added enhancement which is intended to blend with the bridge but still provide needed function.
We hope you enjoy the new bridge and the improvements to the surrounding area while respecting these steps taken to ensure everyone's safety.

*Workers built a special anti-access wall to prevent daredevils from climbing the new Willamette River Bridge arches.*

Posted by Karl Wieseke, ODOT Construction Project Managerat6:25 AM

Wednesday, September 21st, 2011

## I-5 off-ramp to Franklin Boulevard to close for two years

*From ODOT-*

Starting the week of Oct. 3, we will close the I-5 northbound off-ramp to Franklin Boulevard

at exit 192 for up to two years to allow construction of the new northbound I-5 Willamette River Bridge.

The entrance ramp from eastbound Franklin Boulevard to southbound I 5 will remain open. Local access will also remain open at the intersection of Riverview Street and westbound Franklin Boulevard.

The detour route shown in the map below is the same one used during previous short-term closures of the Franklin Boulevard exit ramp. Those of you traveling northbound on I-5 to Franklin Boulevard will detour using exit 191 to Glenwood Boulevard. After exiting, turn right on Glenwood Boulevard to Franklin Boulevard. The detour route will be well-marked.


We have begun notifying the public and key stakeholder organizations such as freight companies, impacted businesses, schools and emergency service responders. We are also working closely with Lane County and the cities of Springfield and Eugene to ensure that they are prepared for this closure.

In addition, we received feedback from businesses on Franklin Boulevard during the three month closure last year. Based on that feedback we developed a more robust signage plan for the two-year closure.

The two-year closure will allow us to rebuild the off-ramp and raise it more than 5 feet to align with the future northbound bridge. By closing the exit, conflicts between construction crews and motorists are eliminated, not just reduced. Construction zone safety is a top priority of ODOT for these reasons:

- During the past decade in Oregon, there has been an average of 475 work zone related crashes per year resulting in an average of 18 work zone serious injury crashes and 8 fatal crashes.

- Nationally, the numbers are even more staggering with an average of 740 work zone fatalities in the past three years.
- The majority of people injured or killed in work zone crashes are drivers, passengers or pedestrians.
- We also know road construction is one of the most dangerous occupations in the United States. The risk of death is seven times higher for road workers than for an average worker.

In addition to following this blog, you can find mobility updates on Twitter: @OregonDOT or on www.Tripcheck.com and www.keepusmoving.info.

We know that this is a significant and lengthy closure and truly appreciate your patience!
Posted byJyll Smith, ODOT PIO at12:48 PM

Wednesday, September 28th, 2011

## Traffic switch, part two!

*From ODOT-*

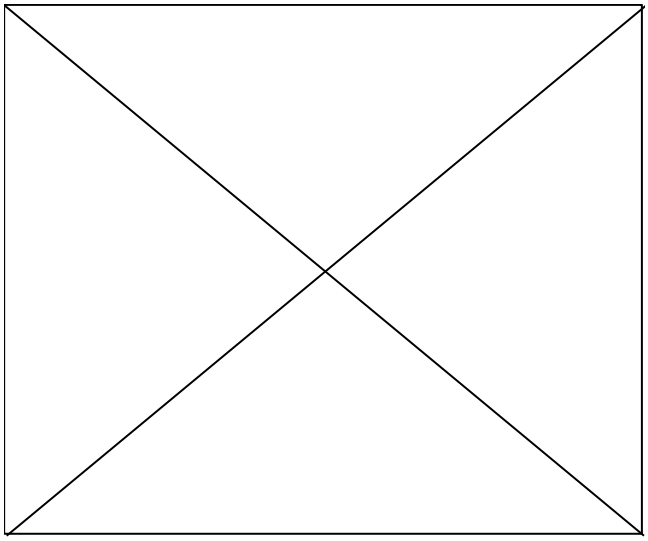
Late Sunday night, we will switch northbound Interstate 5 traffic to begin sharing the new southbound Willamette River Bridge. The traffic switch will end in late 2013, when the new northbound bridge is complete.

Northbound freeway drivers may experience brief delays as crews move concrete barriers and safety barrels to guide traffic onto the new bridge. To minimize traffic impacts, workers will do the lane shifts at night.

Switching southbound traffic to the new bridge at 12:33 a.m. on Aug. 30 went very well. Below is a video showing the moment that the first vehicles drove onto the new southbound Willamette River Bridge.

What's interesting to me is the mix of vehicles. In the first minute, 18 non-construction contractor vehicles crossed the bridge. There were nine commercial vehicles, ranging from a UPS triple-trailer and a double-deck car carrier, to six semi-combos and a large garbage truck. Nine passenger cars and pickups also crossed the new bridge. The importance of the I-5 Willamette River Bridge to Oregon's economy and keeping commercial traffic flowing freely is clearly illustrated here.

The video was filmed by the Willamette River Bridge construction engineering inspection team, who deserve special thanks.



Posted by Jyll Smith, ODOT PIO at 4:10 PM

Monday, October 3rd, 2011

## Boy Scouts help with habitat project

*From ODOT-*

A team of Boy Scouts recently helped us out by conducting small scale environmental improvement work on Augusta Creek. They placed wood and gravel into the creek to improve fish passage. They completed this in one day and by the next day, the water was clear and the site looked great.

We would like to thank Boy Scout Troop 100 as well as the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, who led the effort.

This picture shows the newly improved Augusta Creek.

Posted by Jyll Smith, ODOT PIO at 10:57 AM

Thursday, October 6th, 2011

## Treating what nature provides

*From ODOT-*

On the Willamette River Bridge project, planning for the rainy season and the impacts of water runoff is very important.

The new wider southbound bridge has a larger surface area that will collect more rainwater than the old bridge did. The rainwater runoff becomes contaminated when it mixes with pollutants from vehicles, such as grease, brake dust, automotive fluids and deicing chemicals. Without containment and treatment, the runoff would flow directly into the river and nearby natural areas.

Instead, we have started collecting runoff and discharging it into a system of bioswales for treatment. Bioswales are landscape elements designed to remove silt and pollution from surface runoff. They are gently sloped areas planted with native vegetation. Runoff captured from the bridge is filtered by the vegetation or held in a grassy bowl until particles settle out. The treated water either soaks into the ground or is released into the surrounding watershed, such as the river or nearby creeks.

We have built multiple bioswales to treat rainwater runoff on or near the project site, saving the cost of collecting and piping it for discharge further away.

Building bioswales is just one of the ways ODOT is reducing the environmental footprint of the new Willamette River Bridge.

Posted by Jim Cox Assistant Manager, Major Projects Branch at 9:18 AM

Tuesday, October 11th, 2011

## Here we go again!

*From ODOT-*

Now that all Interstate 5 traffic is crossing the Willamette River on a new bridge, our focus has shifted to tearing down the temporary detour bridge, with Staton Companies of Eugene playing the starring role.

Much of the material from the temporary detour bridge will be recycled or reused in other projects. This includes more than 300 girders—some of reinforced concrete and some of steel. Crews will move the girders to nearby storage yards until they are needed to build other bridges. Watch for lots of trucks entering and leaving the site as we move the girders.

We will demolish the bridge piers once the deck and girders are gone. Workers will cut the piers off flat at the river bottom and lift them out of the water.

We'll also start demolishing the temporary Canoe Canal Bridge, north of the Willamette River Bridge. However, we'll keep a portion of it up until mid-2012 to provide access to other parts of the construction project.

We expect the majority of the demolition to be complete by early 2012. We'll then build the piers for the new northbound bridge, starting with cofferdams at each pier location to facilitate construction under water.

As we move forward, we'll explain these steps in more detail and post more one-of-a-kind pictures here on our blog.

Posted byJyll Smith, ODOT PIO at10:41 AM

Wednesday, October 12th, 2011

## Temporary fish ladder to help with migration

*From ODOT-*

In cooperation with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, our contractor installed a temporary fish ladder near the new Willamette River Bridge.

You may wonder what a fish ladder has to do with the new bridge. Let me explain.
A protected wetland fed by waters from Augusta Creek, Glenwood Slough and other local

streams sits on the south bank of the Willamette River near the bridge. Currently, water from the wetland flows through a pipe under Franklin Boulevard to the river. Unfortunately, juvenile fish can't get safely into the river because the pipe outlet is too high above the river. This also prevents mature fish from returning upstream to spawn.

Recently, biologists identified cutthroat trout upstream from the pipe outlet. We have built a fish ladder—a series of steps that helps fish swim around barriers—as a temporary solution to support the local fish population.

Our bridge project includes restoring the wetlands and stream system on the south bank of the Willamette River to enhance the natural setting and support fish and wildlife habitat. When the bridges are complete, we will restore the streams in the project area, remove culverts, create spawning ponds and reconstruct a historic stream channel outlet to allow for fish passage without needing a fish ladder.

Until then, the temporary fish ladder will allow cutthroat trout living in the waterways on the south bank of the Willamette River to move freely.

Posted by Karl Wieseke, ODOT Construction Project Managerat12:04 PM

Wednesday, October 19th, 2011

## Souvenirs for the future

*From ODOT-*

As crews were finishing the new southbound bridge, they wanted to add to this lasting legacy and introduce future generations to the men and women who built the bridge.

Our contractor, Hamilton, initiated the effort to leave a time capsule in the anti-access walls of the arches.

The bridge workers were invited to leave anything they wanted in the time capsule. Some left personal items, such as business cards or pictures of themselves. Other items included:

- An edition of the Register-Guard featuring an article about the project.
- A CD of construction pictures.
- A DVD featuring a technical video showing how the arches were built.
- Some work schedule calendars.

It's fun to imagine what people will think when they find these souvenirs in a hundred or so years when they replace these bridges.

*Bob Vaughn, Hamilton foreman, displays the time capsule, and then places it in the bridge arch.*

Posted byJyll Smith, ODOT PIO at4:26 PM

Thursday, October 20th, 2011

## The old and the new

*From ODOT-*

I really like this picture showing the new southbound bridge on the right, alongside the old detour structure that we are replacing.


*The graceful arches of new southbound Interstate 5 Willamette River Bridge right, stand in contrast to the long row of piers for the temporary detour bridge built in 2004.*

The stark difference between a basic temporary bridge to one that has beautiful architectural details, graceful arches and far fewer piers in the water, is striking.

This month, we will begin replacing the temporary detour bridge with a new northbound span. It will be a twin of the southbound bridge.

Posted byJyll Smith, ODOT PIO at3:22 PM

Tuesday, October 25th, 2011

## Keeping the river environment healthy

*From ODOT-*

When the original Willamette River Bridge was constructed between 1959 and 1961, workers built diversion dams and filled portions of the river to provide access to the work-site and to capture debris from the construction. Today, with much more knowledge, we understand the environmental impacts on the river from construction and have plans in place to limit them.

Traveling on Franklin Boulevard or on nearby pedestrian paths, you will see the machinery tearing down the temporary detour bridge. However, you may not notice what our contractor built to protect the river and use as a work platform, just as they did for the southbound bridge work in 2009.

Directly under the detour bridge, 10 feet above the river's ordinary high-water level and covering almost 120,000 square feet, is the work bridge. To build the work bridge we first drove steel piles into the river, connected them with large steel beams and then added a work surface of large timbers and plywood. The surface is sealed with an impermeable plastic layer, capturing any runoff and carrying it through pipes to an offsite treatment system before the water is released.

Workers will place sand on the work bridge to cushion large pieces that fall during demolition, but will remove it afterward to keep it from clogging the drainage system.

The work bridge is strong enough to support heavy equipment used in demolition and construction, large enough to capture falling debris from demolition of the temporary bridge and secure enough to build the wooden forms, or falsework, needed to create the new bridge arches.

We are pleased our efforts to protect the river are successful, while at the same time allowing for efficient construction of the new bridge.

Posted byJyll Smith, ODOT PIO at2:37 PM

Friday, October 28th, 2011

## Hundreds of Volunteer Hours Make this Bridge Possible

*From ODOT-* I cannot stress enough how grateful everyone at ODOT is for the citizens who have donated so much time, effort and passion into making this bridge something we are all proud of.

A 12-member Community Advisory Group (CAG) has been instrumental in developing project goals, objectives and design considerations to ensure that community values are a part of the project. They have been meeting since 2007, and have included representatives from local neighborhoods, recreation groups, local artists, architects, the University of Oregon and the Citizen Planning Committee (CPC) for the Whilamut Natural Area of Alton Baker Park. The work on the enhancements has been guided by a Design Enhancement Panel (DEP), a diverse group of design professionals and community representatives, and a Design Enhancement Steering Committee (DESC) made up of four members from the CAG that continues to meet. The four members of the DESC are Charlotte Behm, Bob Kline, Vicky Mello, and Scott Wylie.

ODOT is fortunate to be able to include artistic enhancements on the project that will reflect community values and add cultural significance to the design. Esther Stutzman, a Kalapuya tribal representative, and David Lewis, representative of The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, have played a large role in inspiring the design enhancements. They each set aside time to help develop the bridge's aesthetic values and to foster the designers through their work.

I'd also like to thank our citizen volunteers who have worked to have the bridge renamed the Whilamut Passage Bridge. While the name is not yet official, we are well on our way thanks to their efforts shepherding it through the process. Thank you, all. Your work on this project has ensured that it will resonate with this community for years to come.

Posted by Sonny Chickering, ODOT Area Managerat11:00 AM

Monday, October 31st, 2011

## ODOT joins local efforts to restore a precious natural area

*From ODOT-*

More than 237 acres of parklands in the Whilamut Natural Area are along the north bank of the Willamette River, east and west of Interstate 5, and our bridge replacement project.

The Whilamut Natural Area provides for habitat restoration. It is dedicated to passive uses

such as walking, bicycling and nature appreciation. Its character is very different than the developed park near the Ferry Street Bridge, farther west near downtown Eugene.

In 2001, the local Citizen Planning Committee voted to rename East Alton Baker Park the Whilamut Natural Area. In 2002, local Kalapuya people joined many other residents to commemorate the official renaming. Whilamut (WHEEL-a-moot), a Kalapuya word, means "where the river ripples and runs fast."

Ongoing efforts by the CPC and local volunteers focus on restoring the area's native plants and habitat, with a long-term goal of providing valuable diversity of native plant and wildlife species.

The next time you use the Canoe Canal Path or the North Bank Path, look for restored native plantings and other enhancements that create a more natural environment. ODOT, as part of our Willamette River Bridge project, is a partner with local citizens to restore native habitat in the Whilamut Natural Area.

Posted byJyll Smith, ODOT PIO at3:05 PM

Thursday, November3rd, 2011

## Expect delays on Franklin Boulevard under I-5 Nov. 4 and 7

*From ODOT*-Here's a quick traffic update for Franklin Boulevard as our contractor removes the Interstate 5 detour bridge over the Willamette River that carried traffic until last month. On Friday, Nov. 4 and Monday, Nov. 7, we'll remove the portion of the temporary detour bridge that passes over Franklin Boulevard. This will cause traffic delays on Franklin Boulevard for up to 20 minutes between 7 a.m. and 3 p.m. both days. There will be no traffic delays on Franklin Boulevard on Saturday and Sunday. Flaggers will occasionally stop traffic to keep motorists out of harm's way as crews remove and place bridge beams onto trucks standing by to haul them away. The beams will be stored for use in future bridge construction. We'll work to minimize the traffic stops and we appreciate your patience!

Posted bySuzanne Roberts at2:32 PM

Tuesday, November 8th, 2011

## Taking the temporary bridge down

*From ODOT-*

Bridge demolition is fun to watch, as shown by these pictures taken as we removed the original Willamette River Bridge in 2009. We are using the same process to remove the temporary bridge.

No, it’s not a scene from “Transformers.” It’s a specialized hydraulic crane crunching a big bite out of the old bridge.

Multiple demolition cranes worked to demolish the original bridge and sort through the rubble.

Demolition of a bridge column reveals the steel bars that give it strength. Recycling as much steel, concrete and other construction materials as we can saves taxpayer dollars and significantly reduces the project's waste stream.

Posted by Jyll Smith, ODOT PIO at 11:31 AM

Thursday, November 10th, 2011

## Twin bridges, but not identical

*From ODOT-*

Soon, you will see the piers and foundations poured for the new northbound Interstate 5 Willamette River Bridge.

When finished, the northbound span will appear identical to the southbound bridge, but up close, you'll see a few significant differences.

What's the same:
The main arch spans crossing the river will be identical and both bridges touch down only once in the river, in stark contrast to the old bridge's numerous piers.

What's different:
The new bridges will be noticeably different on the south end where they connect to the

roadway.

The southbound bridge has nine spans and a total length of 1,759 feet. The northbound bridge will have 10 spans and a total length of 1,985 feet. The additional northbound span will pass over the I-5 northbound off-ramp to Franklin Boulevard.

For the majority of their length, the two bridges will have a gap of 16 feet between them. But the gap will narrow as the two bridges meet the roadway at the south end.

Because of the small difference in the twin bridges, we save time and money by using the same design on both and incorporating lessons learned from building the first into the second bridge.

Posted by Jim Cox Assistant Manager, Major Projects Branchat3:20 PM

Monday, November 14th, 2011

## Moving large bridge beams is impressive to watch

*From ODOT-*

Just what are the steps in removing the large beams that support the temporary I-5 Willamette River Bridge and hauling them off to storage? The photos below show how it's done.

In this picture, we see crews removing the beams that cross the railroad tracks on the south side of the Willamette River. Crews will remove more than 300 beams from the temporary bridge.

Moving the beams requires multiple cranes and other equipment. The beam launcher (at right) placed between the piers supports the beams so they can be moved off the piers and onto the deck.

Here's a close-up of a beam being moved using the launcher.

Next, crews stack the beams on the bridge deck.


Then, they load the beams onto trucks and haul them offsite for reuse or recycling. Each beam is so large that it takes its own truck. Beams vary in length from 80 feet to 115 feet.

In all, crews will remove 326 beams from the temporary bridge to be reused on other projects or recycled into useful construction materials.

Posted by Jyll Smith, ODOT PIO at 2:31 PM

Wednesday, November 16th, 2011

## The 3 R's for Willamette River Bridge: Reduce, Reuse, & Recycle

*From ODOT-*

Dismantling the temporary bridge over the Willamette River is ahead of schedule. We are recycling or reusing a significant amount of material from the temporary detour bridge, saving money and reducing the project's waste stream.

With the asphalt deck pavement removed, crews separate the support beams and lift each to the top of the bridge and load them on trucks for transport to an offsite area until they can be reused on other highway or local agency projects.

ODOT's contractor, Hamilton Construction, will reuse 50 concrete beams from the temporary bridge to build a new viaduct and pedestrian path along the south bank of the river. Currently, 174* additional beams are slated to go in projects throughout Lane County and other parts of the state. In the end, nearly 70 percent of the 326 beams from the temporary bridge will find a home in this or another highway project.

The beams that are not identified for reuse in bridge projects are sawed in to smaller lengths and will be hauled off site and find uses such as retaining walls.

The concrete columns and cross beams are broken apart and the aggregates and reinforcing steel are separated and will be recycled or reused. We break up the concrete with hammers

that run on all-natural canola oil, which reduces the risk of river contamination in case of a spill.

Most of the temporary detour bridge will be gone by the end of December. Then we'll start building the footings and arches for the new northbound bridge.

*Corrected from 224.

Posted by Karl Wieseke, ODOT Construction Project Managerat6:47 AM

Wednesday, November 23rd, 2011

## Happy Thanksgiving!

*From ODOT-*

Tomorrow is Thanksgiving, and as we prepare to spend this special time with family and friends, I'm also reminded about things I'm thankful for on the Interstate 5 Willamette River Bridge project.

I am thankful that we have such good partners on the CM/GC design and construction team. Led by OBEC Consulting Engineers and Hamilton Construction, they are building a high-quality project and are great partners to work with.

I'm thankful for our community members and their kind words of support for the progress we are making with limited disruptions.

I'm thankful for the many citizen volunteers who have devoted hundreds of hours of their time and passion to help make the new bridges a better fit for the community.

I'm thankful to the business leaders in Springfield and Eugene who work with our teams to minimize traffic disruptions.

And finally, I'm thankful that our crews will get to start their weekend early on Wednesday afternoon.

Construction work on the Willamette River Bridge project will stop temporarily for the Thanksgiving weekend by early Wednesday afternoon. Please remember that all work zone speed limits and signs remain in effect because the work site is still active.

Please drive safely, allow extra time for travel over the Thanksgiving weekend and have a happy holiday celebration!

Posted byJyll Smith, ODOT PIO at9:00 AM

Monday, November 28th, 2011

## The best of both worlds for walkers and cyclists

*From ODOT*-Not only is ODOT building a new Interstate 5 bridge over the Willamette River, but we are also improving park paths in the project area. Pedestrians and bicyclists will enjoy greater safety as a result of our cooperation with local communities to improve the paths. When bridge construction began, we built a new paved path in the Eastgate Woodlands area of the Whilamut Natural Area, making bike commuting safer by eliminating dangerous blind corners.With this new Eastgate Woodlands path in place, we closed a hazardous portion of the Canoe Canal path under Walnut Road Bridge and made plans to convert the paved path to a soft path for runners and walkers.

Crews tear up the old concrete path near Walnut Road to replace it with a soft path.

The first step was for our contractor to remove the old pavement and replace it with a new soft path. They also built stairs from Walnut Road to give walkers easy access to the new path. Bike commuters now have a safer paved bike path, while runners and walkers enjoy the softer surface of the new Canoe Canal path. It's the best of both worlds.

Above is a picture of the newly completed soft path in the Whilamut Natural Area that runs under Walnut Road.

Posted byJyll Smith, ODOT PIO at2:30 PM

Wednesday, November 30th, 2011

## Waterways Surrounding the Bridges

*From ODOT-*

Do you know that besides the Willamette River, there are 13 other bodies of water surrounding our project?

Both natural and manmade waterways flow here. The Whilamut Natural Area is home to the Canoe Canal, also known as Patterson Slough, and two protected wetlands. The Canoe Canal water originates from a diversion structure built in 1974 east of the bridge and reconnects to the river near the Ferry Street Bridge. The wetlands retain rainwater throughout much of the year, providing natural filtration and supporting a diverse plant environment.

On the south bank of the river, an interconnected network of waterways includes eight wetlands and two creeks. Three of the largest are Laurel Valley Creek, Augusta Creek and the Glenwood Slough. Water from the Laurel Hill Valley neighborhood winds through this network and flows into the river west of the bridges. Located along Interstate 5, the Franklin Boulevard off-ramp and the railroad tracks, this network captures and naturally treats rain runoff.

Before construction began, we developed plans to avoid or minimize impacts to all of these bodies of water. As part of the Willamette River Bridge project, we will improve this system through stream restoration and new bioswales that capture and treat more of the runoff before it enters the river.

Posted by Sonny Chickering, ODOT Area Managerat2:56 PM

Thursday, December 8th, 2011

## Recent sightings on the Willamette River Bridge project

*From ODOT-*

Our contracting team regularly takes amazing photos of the work under way. This means I get to share with you some of these one-of-a-kind views. Enjoy!

Here, a worker is finishing the surface of the new southbound bridge arch.

The size of this worker standing next to the temporary ladder on the south bank of the Willamette River illustrates how large it actually is. We're also excited to say we've already seen fish using the ladder.

We recently told you about the extensive reuse and recycling of demolition waste that our crews do. In this picture, you can see just a small portion of the material that they work with.

Posted by Jyll Smith, ODOT PIO at 10:40 AM

Wednesday, December 14th, 2011

## Crews use diamonds to protect the environment

*From ODOT-*

When the I-5 Willamette River Bridge project is finished in 2014, we'll see a beautiful pair of arched bridges, touching down in the river only once. That's quite a contrast to the original bridge and its temporary replacement, which were supported by scores of concrete columns marching across the river.

This month, we began removing the last series of 21 columns from the temporary detour bridge. We're doing this work carefully because we're committed to protecting, preserving and enhancing the river environment during construction. In fact, we're striving to keep all debris out of the river and will cut the columns off at the riverbed to remove any trace they ever existed.

It's a big job. Each remaining column is demolished above the work bridge using big hydraulic hammers. The work bridge catches all the concrete and steel debris, which is recycled.

Crews then remove the work bridge surrounding each column. This allows them to use a special diamond-encrusted flexible wire saw to cut and remove each column in sections, all the way to the bottom of the river. Each cut section is lifted onto the bridge, where it is demolished and recycled.

*Here's a close-up of the special wire saw. It's ultra-sharp, cuts clean and creates only a fine dust that eliminates any environmental impact to the river.*

Cutting the columns below the waterline is a big improvement over earlier demolition methods, which required building an intrusive cofferdam to reroute the river, then demolishing columns directly on the riverbed's mud. And it's also safer for the environment and workers alike.

*Here is the diamond saw removing columns on the original Willamette River Bridge two years ago. The smooth top surface shows where the saw previously cut through the concrete column and connecting wall. Workers stop the saw regularly so they can descend on ladders to drive big steel wedges into the cut to prevent binding.*

ODOT and our contractor, Hamilton Construction, are committed to leaving the project site and local environment in better condition than before construction began.

Posted byJyll Smith, ODOT PIO at12:13 PM

Monday, December 19th, 2011

## Building cofferdams is the first step in building the new northbound bridge

*From ODOT* - With the temporary bridge removed, construction on the new northbound Willamette River Bridge drilled shafts will begin early in the new year. We plan to open this bridge to traffic by fall 2013. Before then, a lot of work needs to be done. A critical first step is constructing cofferdams. These temporary enclosures keep water and soil out of the work area while we build new bridge footings and shafts in the river and on each bank. To build our cofferdams, crews drive sheet piles deep down to the bedrock to establish an enclosure. They then excavate soil from inside the enclosure. Water may be needed to be pumped out to create a dry and safe work space. When the cofferdams are finished, we will use large drilling equipment to bore holes deep in the ground so workers can install steel reinforcement and pour concrete shafts to provide support for the bridge columns. We'll have more photos and details on building the new bridge as construction work continues. *This photo shows one of the cofferdams from the southbound bridge.*

Posted by Karl Wieseke, ODOT Construction Project Managerat9:52 AM

Thursday, December 22nd, 2011

## Construction work takes a holiday Dec. 23 to Jan. 3

*From ODOT*-In the week before Christmas, our contractor crews have been wrapping up their in-water work to remove all traces of the old detour bridge columns before taking a well-deserved holiday break. Construction work on the Willamette River Bridge project will stop the afternoon of Dec. 23, with crews returning to work in the New Year on Jan. 3. During the holiday work break, the construction site is still an active work zone and safety remains our No. 1 priority. We will post a 24-hour security team at the construction site to keep it safe. Drivers and park users will still have to pay attention to construction signs, path detours and construction speed zone restrictions. There is bound to be more park use over the holiday week, so cyclists should watch their speed and keep a sharp lookout for other path users as well. When work resumes in January, crews will focus on drilling large shafts deep into bedrock for the foundations that will support the new northbound bridge. They will start their work south of the railroad tracks, moving north as they go. Starting in mid-January, you may catch a glimpse of the big drills at work as you travel along Franklin Boulevard under the freeway. Happy Holidays from the entire project team, the ODOT construction team in Springfield and our contractor crews from Hamilton Construction!

Posted bySuzanne Roberts at9:53 AM

Wednesday, December 28th, 2011

## Our latest newsletter is now available online

*From ODOT-*

Our December newsletter pays tribute to community volunteers who have worked hard to make the Willamette River Bridge project so successful and highlights recent construction and environmental activities.

If you haven't read our project newsletter lately, take a peek. We publish it four times a year to update you on construction work and on mobility and safety notices. We distribute our newsletter to more than 975 interested readers and electronic copies are available in the library section of our project website.

To subscribe to the project newsletter, please call Nichole Hayward at (541) 484-7052 or send an email to nichole@cawood.com. To save taxpayer dollars- and trees- we send the newsletter by email unless you ask for a printed copy. Our newsletter is also available in alternative formats by requests.

Happy reading, and Happy New Year to one and all!

Posted by Jyll Smith, ODOT PIO at 1:17 PM