

SPEED: Citizen inquiry led to traffic study with ODOT

Continued from page 1

study will take about a year to complete, from beginning the study to the issuance of final speed zone determinations by the State traffic engineer. Bertagna is grateful for the positive working relationship the City continues to enjoy with ODOT, following completion of the Cascade Avenue upgrade.

“We appreciate ODOT’s willingness to work with us to clarify speed zone limits in an effort to make necessary adjustments within the city,” he said.

An inquiry from T.W. Scannell, a 20-year resident of Sisters, helped to prompt the undertaking of the traffic study at this time. Scannell, who travels back and forth several times each day on Camp Polk Road (Locust Street when it nears town) noticed when the 25 mph sign was moved north from its location near Green Ridge to near the airport. At that time he thought the change was unnecessary.

“Neither side of that section of the road is residential or business. Twenty-five

miles an hour was fine when the construction was going on. It made sense. But when the construction was done, there was no justification for it,” he said.

Road workers told him that the 25 mph change was only going to be in effect during the Cascade Avenue project, when trucks were being detoured around downtown, and it would be returned to its original location at the finish of the project.

When the signs were not moved back and when one of the new traffic feedback signs, with blinking numbers, was placed above the 25 mph sign, Scannell decided to do some sleuthing and contacted ODOT.

He received a copy of a November 1999 speed zone order stating that — following an ODOT traffic study requested by the City of Sisters — a determination had been made that the speed designated was greater than was reasonable under the conditions found on the section of Locust Street from Highway 20 (Cascade Avenue) to Green Ridge Avenue.

The order called for signs to be installed indicating a 25 mph speed zone from the highway north on Locust to Green Ridge and 40 mph from Green Ridge

to 0.19 miles north of Green Ridge. In the first section, which passes the elementary school, the designated speed is 20 mph when children are present.

An ODOT traffic investigations coordinator told Scannell the new location of the 25 mph sign was actually illegal.

City staff was unaware of the 1999 order when they moved the 25 mph sign closer to the airport. It has since been returned to its spot near Green Ridge.

The ODOT engineering studies will survey the roads for the following: lane and shoulder widths; signals and stop signs; number of intersections and other accesses; roadside development; and parking and bicycle lanes. Other analysis includes: number and type of vehicles; number of pedestrians and cyclists; crash history; and speed checks.

There have been a number of significant changes within the city with regards to traffic, including new subdivisions, increased traffic through and around Sisters, and increasing commercial development, all of which require a thorough review of the existing speed zones in those areas.

In the absence of posted speed limits, Oregon state



PHOTO BY JIM CORNELIUS

The City has moved the speed indicator back in closer to downtown.

law gives motorists the following designated speeds: 15 mph on alleys and narrow residential streets; 20 mph in business districts and school zones; 25 mph in residential districts, near public parks, and on ocean shores; 55 mph on open and rural highways, and for trucks on interstate highways; and 65 mph for autos on interstate highways.

According to an ODOT brochure, designated and posted speeds are not the final word in Oregon, for all travel on public streets and

highways is subject to the Basic Rule. The Basic Rule states that a motorist must drive at a speed that is reasonable and prudent at all times by considering other traffic, road and weather conditions, dangers at intersections and any other conditions that affect safety and speed.

The Basic Rule does not allow motorists to drive faster than the posted speed or designated speed. Instead, it expects drivers to be responsible for their own actions.

FURRY FRIENDS CAN USE YOUR REDEEMABLE BOTTLES AND CANS!

All bottles & cans MUST be labeled with OR 5¢



carbonated soft drinks • water • beer/malt beverages



We CANNOT accept milk jugs, wine or liquor bottles, etc...



Help us raise funds by dropping them off (in closed plastic bags only, please) at The Nugget office, 442 E. Main Ave. For information, please call 541-549-9941. Thank you for you donation!

www.FurryFriendsFoundation.org

Sisters Pet Food Bank • Spay/Neuter Sponsorships • Emergency Medical Assistance