

REGIONAL NEWS



Exit 63, shown, and Exit 64, on Interstate 84 in Hood River will be under construction starting March 2. This is the view from Second Street looking east toward exit 64. Kirby Neumann-Rea photo

ODOT starts work on I-84 between exits 63-64 this week

Repairs began March 2 to the aging bridges that carry Interstate 84 across Hood River. That will mean around-the-clock single lane closures in both directions and ramp closures.

The concrete decks are deteriorating on the I-84 structures over Hood River between exits 63 and 64. The repairs will increase their lifespans and safety. Work will take place in phases to minimize impacts during the peak summer travel season.

Phase one runs March through May 2020; phase two continues September through November 2020 and phase three will be January through May 2021.

In between phases, traffic impacts will be minimized, but some work may still occur.

Additional ODOT advisories One lane in both directions of I-84 will be closed 24/7 during each phase of construction.

Expect traffic shifts with reduced lane and shoulder widths.

Speed limits in the work zone will be reduced

to 50 mph during construction. Watch out for the workers.

Expect nighttime ramp closures of on- and off-ramps at Exit 63 (toward Hood River City Center) and Exit 64 (toward Oregon 35, White Salmon and Government Camp).

The ramps will periodically close from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m., Monday through Thursday nights, primarily at the beginning and end of each phase. Travelers should use an alternate route.

Cyclists using the shoulder of I-84 will need to use an alternate route during construction.

Pedestrians can continue using the overcrossings and trails under I-84 with minor delays.

Check TripCheck.com for up-to-date traffic impacts during construction.

For more information Search for the project, officially titled "I-84: Hood River Bridges Repair," in ODOT's project list at www.oregon.gov/odot/Projects/Pages/default.aspx.

Columbia Gorge CASA welcomes new volunteers

Columbia Gorge CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) has introduced their newest child advocates: John Fisher, The Dalles; Marianna Roberts and Emily Anderson, Mosier; Jackie Selevan and Carol Beamer, White Salmon; and Stephanie Pate and Ed Drew, Hood River.

After completing 36 hours of profession training, the group was sworn into duty by the Honorable John A. Olson on Feb. 20.

Olson welcomed the newest advocates and subsequently described many of the attributes he feels CASAs bring to the court, and pertinent information concerning a child CASAs bring to the court's attention.

Appointed and empowered directly by the courts, CASA volunteers advocate for a child's best interest by providing critical information to judges about the child's needs and well-being to help the judge make the most well-informed decision. The CASA model was created more than 40 years ago and CASA programs have established themselves and their volunteers as trusted partners with the courts and



New CASA volunteers recently sworn in are, left to right, Marianna Roberts, Stephanie Pate, Jackie Selevan, John Fisher, Judge John A. Olson, Ed Drew, Carol Beamer and Emily Anderson. Contributed photo

child welfare professionals.

On any given day, there are nearly 443,000 children in foster care in the United States, served by more than 93,000 dedicated CASA volunteers, said a press release. On average, nationally, children remain in state care for nearly two years and six percent of children in foster care have languished there for five or more years. Among these children, around 200 are available for adoption and waiting for adoptive families in Oregon, according to AdoptUSKids.

Columbia Gorge CASA serves children in Hood River, Wasco and Sherman counties, with the mission to

advocate for the needs and well-being of children in foster care through professionally trained and supported community volunteers.

New advocate training sessions will begin in April.

To learn more about the CASA program, contact Michelle Mayfield, training coordinator, or Susan Baldwin, volunteer manager, at 541-386-3468 or www.gorgecasa.org.

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