

706.7 MILES OF HIGHWAY MODERNIZED

State Commission Gravel and Paves Main Roads in Eastern Oregon Division, Giving Autoists Some of Best Highways in World—Work Not Yet Completed

Work, Started in 1917 When Body Was First Organized, Results in Improvements of Great Value to Union and Nearby Counties—Program Proposes Surfacing of 294.36 Miles, Part of Which Is Already Under Contract.

Since 1917, when location and construction of highways on the state highway system was commenced, 706.7 miles of state highway have been completed in this division which comprises seven Eastern Oregon counties and a portion of an eighth county. The total mileage of highway in this division is 1001.06 miles, including sections improved, unimproved and under contract.

Besides the graded and surfaced highways now under maintenance totaling 706.7 miles there are graded and surfaced highways not under maintenance totaling 12.65 miles; graded but not under maintenance, 32.61 miles; under contract for grading, 27.14 miles; under contract for surfacing, 12.7 miles; surfacing authorized for immediate construction, 10.6 miles and unimproved highways in the division, 221.39 miles.

Commission Authorized in 1917.

On February 19, 1917, a law establishing the state highway commission was approved by the governor of Oregon, and on March 1, S. Benson, of Portland; W. L. Thompson, of Pendleton, and E. J. Adams of Eugene, were appointed first state highway commissioners. The road body prior to the enacting of this statute consisted of James Withycombe, governor; Ben W. Oleott, secretary of state, and Thomas B. Kay, state treasurer.

In October 1916 M. O. Bennett was sent by the then existing highway commission to Eastern Oregon to make a survey between Pendleton and La Grande. During the winter of 1916 and '17 a survey was made from Kamela to Pendleton, Pendleton to Umatilla and Umatilla to Heppner Junction. Those surveys were completed about March, 1917.

Bennett First Engineer.

April 1, 1917 M. O. Bennett was appointed division engineer for the Eastern Oregon division, which at that time covered all territory east of the Cascade mountains—about twenty counties. Mr. Bennett was the first division engineer of this section. His headquarters were at Pendleton.

During the same month a survey was made from Huggard to La Grande and in May and June of that year surveys were made from Heppner to Pilot Rock and Pendleton.

During the month of May the highway between Pendleton and Adams on the Oregon-Washington highway was surveyed. This road for a distance of about ten miles was old macadam previously constructed by Union county. The county regarded and widened this section during the summer of 1917.

On June 22 of that year a contract was let by the state highway commission for its paving with bituminous pavement. This job was the first one let by the commission for highway construction in what is now the Eastern Oregon division, the headquarters at La Grande. The cost of grading this section to Umatilla county was approximately \$10,000. The total cost of paving, which included the cost of a one-mile section west of Pendleton was \$162,626.65.

Grading Work Started.

During the year 1917 grading was commenced in Union county on the Old Oregon Trail between Hot Lake and La Grande, a two-mile section being completed during the same year. Also a survey was made from La Grande to Minam on the La Grande-Wallowa Lake highway during that year.

Surveys were also started on the Baker-Cornucopia highway in Baker county during the year 1917. A total of about 32 miles was surveyed in that county during that year although no contracts were let. No construction was carried on in any other counties in this division in 1917.

In 1918 several projects were started but due to the cost of materials and because the war made it necessary that all of the resources of the state be used to assist the government and the fact that so many of the state highway engineers were called to the colors very little was accomplished.

New Projects Taken Up.

In the spring of 1919 a number of projects were begun. The entire Columbia River highway and the Old Oregon Trail from Heppner Junction to Pendleton was placed under contract for grading and macadamizing and the Old Oregon Trail east of Pendleton toward La Grande, from Pendleton to Lead Mark's pass, the Cambridge section a distance of 16 miles—was contracted for grading and macadamizing.

In Union county contracts were let for the paving of the Old Oregon Trail from La Grande to Lone Tree and the section from La Grande to Island City on the La Grande-Wallowa Lake highway. Contracts were also awarded for macadamizing the section between Lone Tree and Hot Lake during the year 1919, and the section from Union to Heppner.

During the same year a contract was let for the grading and surfacing of the Baker-Haines section of the Old Oregon Trail in Baker county. In Malheur county a section from Cairo to Nyssa was graded to state standard by Malheur county and a contract for surfacing was let by the state highway commission late in 1919.

In Baker and Malheur counties a

section from Huntington to Weiser and one from Weiser to Ontario were contracted for grading and surfacing that year. During the years 1920, '21 and '22 a section of approximately 26 miles from Vale to Cow Valley on the John Day highway was graded and macadamized.

In 1921 a section of 13.2 miles on the Baker-Cornucopia highway was graded and in Morrow county approximately 35 miles of macadam was constructed from Heppner to the Gilliam county line on the Oregon-Washington highway. The portion from Heppner toward Pendleton consisting of about 12 miles on the same highway was also graded that year.

Umatilla county contracts were awarded for approximately 15 miles of grading and macadam from Pilot Rock to Union and on the Cold Springs-Holdman section of the Pendleton-Cold Springs highway about 12.2 miles in length was placed under contract for grading and surfacing.

On the La Grande-Wallowa Lake highway the section from Rock Creek at the head of Wallowa canyon to a point two miles east of Lostine, was graded and surfaced in 1921 and the section between Enterprise and Joseph, 6.2 miles, of grading and surfacing was completed.

Trail Stretch Surfaced.

During the year 1922 the Old Oregon Trail from Kamela to the Oro Dell was surfaced with macadam and a section in Baker county from Baker to Nelson was placed under contract for grading and macadamizing. In Umatilla county the grading and surfacing of the section across the Blue mountains from Dead Man's pass to the Union and Umatilla county line was contracted for grading and surfacing.

In that year a section of 1.2 miles through the city of Union was paved with bituminous pavement.

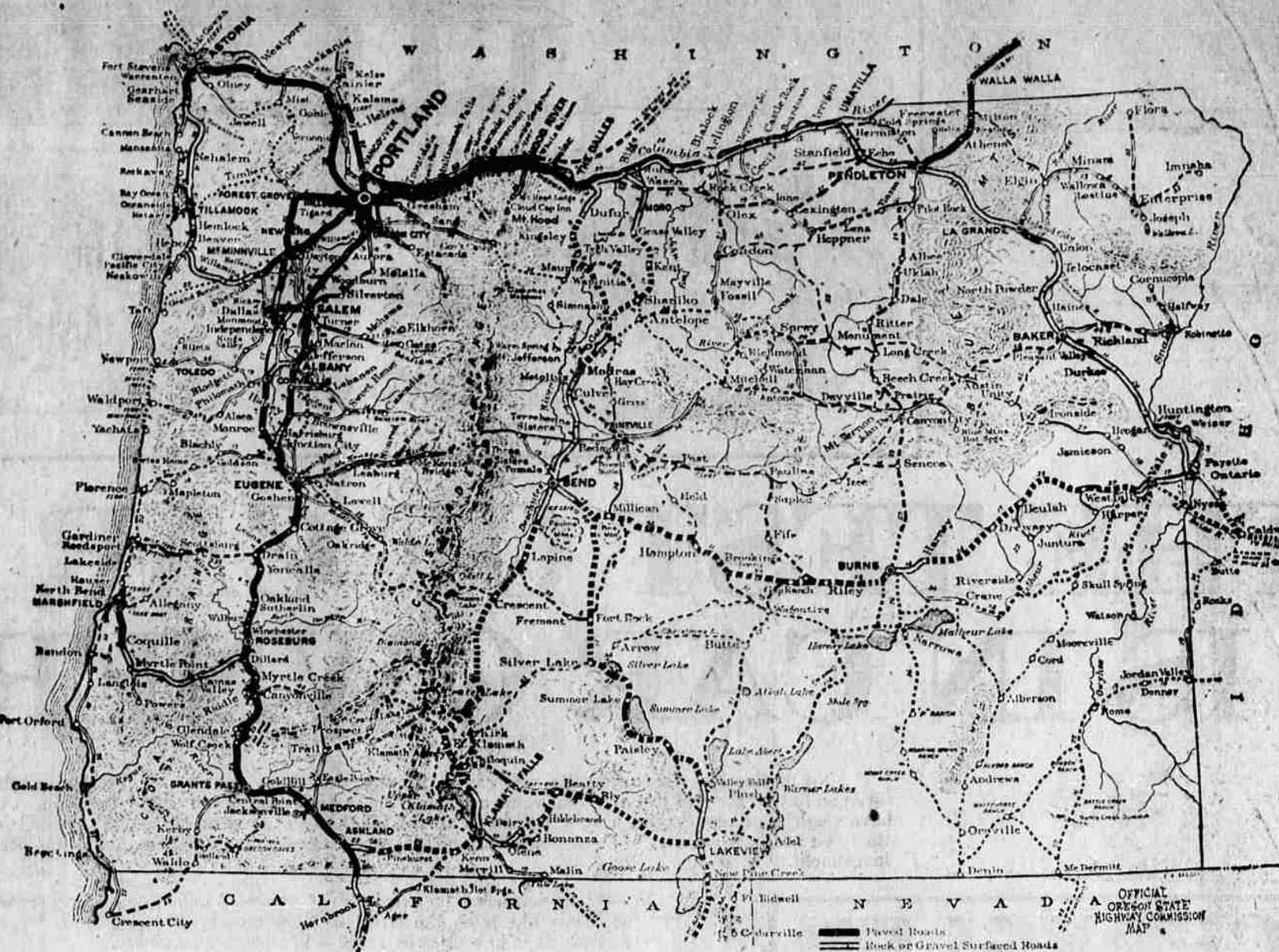
The road from Island City to Regin on the La Grande-Wallowa Lake highway was let for grading and macadamizing that year also. The portion known as the Minam grade was graded and surfaced in 1921 and '22 and in 1922 the part of the La Grande-Wallowa Lake highway from a point two miles east of Lostine to Enterprise was awarded for grading and macadamizing.

During the years 1922, '21 and '20 the section from Baker to the foot of Mt. Gable, approximately 22 miles on the Baker-Enterprise highway was graded, and on the Baker-Cornucopia highway three sections totaling about 20 miles were graded and partly surfaced. Last year in Malheur county on the John Day highway a section 13.2 miles in length between Vale and Ontario was graded and macadamized.

County Work Completed

During the years 1924 and 1923

Many Highways Throughout State Paved Or Graveled



Above is a late map of Oregon, showing the state highways. The paved roads are in black and the rock or gravel surfaced roads in white with a black border. Broken lines represent other roads, not improved by the state highway commission. A survey of the map will show La Grande's excellent position. It is easily reached by every important city in the state and from Ashland to La Grande, a distance of 614 miles, can be made in two days with an automobile. Other cities are the following distances from La Grande: Arlington, 142.8; Astoria, 396.1; Baker, 50.3; Bend, 321.6; Burns, 213.3; Canyon City, 140.3; Corvallis, 375.8; Enterprise, 67.1; Eugene, 413.7; Hood River, 221.6; Portland, 290.6; Pendleton, 56; Salem, 341.9; Seaside, 416.2; The Dalles, 197.1, and Vale, 150.8.

—Cut by courtesy of Southwestern Oregon News.

the next few years.

Construction to be Expensive.

The Pendleton-John Day highway, which is also called the Joseph Miller highway, begins about eight miles west of Pilot Rock on the Oregon-Washington highway, and extends in a southwesterly direction through the Blue Mountains to John Day Valley in Grant county. It passes through a mountainous country which is sparsely settled. The nature of the country is such that construction will be very expensive. This highway will probably not be constructed in the very near future.

The major part of the program of this division for a few years at least will likely consist of maintenance and betterment. Narrow sections of the highways will be widened and sections of macadam will be resurfaced and a greater portion of the macadam oiled.

Oiling Roads at Present.

Oil was first placed on macadam in this division in Umatilla county, about six miles of the Old Oregon Trail west of Pendleton, in 1923. The results were so satisfactory that in 1925 the Old Oregon Trail from Heppner Junction to Pendleton, about 75 miles, and a section from Lone Tree to Telocast in Union county, a distance of 18 miles, and a section in Malheur county near Ontario, a distance of 10 miles, were oiled.

At present the highway commission contemplates the oiling of practically all the Old Oregon Trail during 1926 and a short section of 18 miles of the La Grande-Wallowa Lake highway and undoubtedly all sections of macadam of the state highway system will be oiled as the macadam is placed in condition for oiling.

To Finish Work This Year.

The La Grande-Wallowa Lake highway, a distance of 75 miles was completed January 1, 1924 and the Enterprise-Flora highway in Wallowa county, approximately 10 miles in length will also be completed about January 1, 1927.

Approximately 62 miles of the Baker-Cornucopia highway in Baker county will be finished by January 1927. The John Day highway from Arlington in Gilliam county to Ontario on the Snake River in Malheur county will in all probability be completed, both grading and macadamizing by January 1, 1927, and the Baker-Enterprise highway, entirely within Baker county is expected to be graded and macadamized its entire length of about 30 miles by January 1928.

The major portion of the completed highway in this division is the Central Oregon highway extending from Vale through Burns to the west line of Harney county, thence on to Bend. The greater portion of this section will be expensive construction, and inasmuch as the country traversed is very sparsely settled it is unlikely this highway will be completed within

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