

2019 ODOT Completed Project Highlights

In 2019 we completed dozens of projects in eastern Oregon, and began a few larger multi-year projects that will carry-over into 2020.

The BIG three

Our three larger projects are correcting a dangerous curve, providing real-time road conditions information to travelers and eliminating a major wintertime bottleneck for freight.

- On the Wallowa Lake Highway, OR 82, we're fixing the hair-raising 25 mph Minam curve near milepost 30. This year we blasted and moved over 350,000 cubic yards of rock from the hillside to cut a new 40 mpg curve alignment. Most of the heavy excavation is done. We'll open the new curve to traffic in 2020.

- On Interstate 84, we're adding new digital reader boards, lighting, cameras, road and weather sensors, flashing curve warning signs and other features at select locations between Pendleton and La Grande as part of our Snow Zone Safety Improvement Project. In 2019 we ran power under the road shoulder and constructed lighting and sign footings from the base of Cabbage Hill near milepost 218 to the top of the grade near milepost 225. In 2020 we'll install the new features, linking the sensors to the digital signs so they relay real-time warnings of snow, ice, fog, and other hazardous conditions. Flashing curve warning signs near La Grande will also help warn motorists of the many twists and turns where the freeway follows the Grande Ronde River.

- Our I-84 Ladd Canyon Freight and Culvert Improvement Project repaved 10 miles of freeway and added a couple feet to the shoulder width east of La Grande. We also realigned a three-quarter-mile section of Brush Creek along the steep Ladd Canyon grade, replaced several culverts and removed the Exit 270 overpass bridge. The bridge was replaced with a large box culvert to reduce icing issues that have plagued the structure since it was built in the 1970s. In 2020 we'll add a new third lane for slow moving trucks headed up the steep eastbound Ladd Canyon grade, which has been a traffic bottleneck for decades, especially in wintertime.

Additional key safety projects

- We installed several miles of cable bar-



Work progresses on the OR 82 Minam Curve Project

rier in select areas of the freeway median between Boardman and the Idaho border. This is a proven safety feature that helps prevent deadly cross over crashes that can occur when a vehicle veers off the road, crosses the median and into the opposite freeway lanes. The barrier is typically installed at known trouble spots and areas where the median is less than 100 feet wide.

- We constructed a turn-around spot for westbound vehicles near the Gangloff Park overlook on U.S. 30 above La Grande. This is needed when the westbound I-84 freeway onramp at Exit 259 is closed. Previously, long trucks could not turn around when the freeway ramp closed and traffic was stopped along U.S. 30. The turn-around is ready for use if needed this winter. We'll finish the project in 2020.

Pavement repairs and resurfacing

Nothing says "summer" like inevitable highway resurfacing projects, and this past year we made sure people knew it was summertime. We don't enjoy waiting for that pilot

car any more than you do, but just imagine what conditions our highways would be in if we didn't continually maintain them with crack seals, pavement overlays, concrete repairs and chip seals. This year we:

- Crack sealed over 100 lane miles along I-84, OR 207, OR 82 and other routes.
- Constructed pavement overlays and/or chip seals on over 250 lane miles of U.S. 20, OR 201, OR 7, OR 335, OR 334, OR 82 and other highways.
- Repaired numerous sections of concrete pavement and bridge joints along I-82 and I-84.

Culvert and bridge work

Along with the Ladd Canyon Project bridge and culverts work, we repaired the Snake River bridges at the Oregon/Idaho border, repaired the Nolan Road Bridge on I-84 near milepost 195 and fixed the Marley Creek culvert under OR 244 near milepost 31 at Camp Elkanah. We also continued annual culvert cleaning operations at several other locations throughout the region.

Preserving history

One small project we're extremely proud of involved repairing and preserving the rock retaining wall at the Old Chief Joseph Memorial site along OR 351 at the north end of Wallowa Lake. Built by tribal members of the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s and '40s, there were concerns that the new multi-use path built next to the memorial site in 2017 might negatively impact the wall. Working with local tribal leaders we brought in experts from the U.S. National Parks Service to assess the condition and re-grout portions of the wall using the same tri-colored scheme of the original design. The repairs will help ensure this historic site will be here for future generations.

These projects represent only some of the work we performed over the past 12 months. We'll be back in the spring to finish uncompleted projects and start a host of new construction activities in our never-ending task of preserving and maintaining over 5,000 lane miles of eastern Oregon's state transportation system.