Welcome to this year's Winter Roadway Guide

Welcome, eastern Oregonians and visitors, to another edition of the Oregon Department of Transportation's Winter Roadway Guide. The goal of this annual publication is to improve safety for travelers throughout our area by providing some important reminders as well as updates on various projects. We hope you find the enclosed articles about chaining up, sharing the road with plows, driving in snowy conditions and more helpful. I encourage you to share this publication with other family members as Mother Nature serves up another season of winter driving challenges.

More eyes on safety

I am very excited that this year we have expanded our reach of the ODOT Winter Roadway Guide to now include Umatilla, Wallowa and Grant counties. In the past the publication typically was inserted in the La Grande Observer and the Baker City Herald. This marks the first time it is also being supplied with the East Oregonian, the Hermiston Herald, the Wallowa County Chieftain and the Blue Mountain Eagle newspapers. I really appreciate the EO Media Group for helping get our winter safety messages to more readers. For those who haven't seen it before, I think you will find the information useful.

Highway construction

Many of the projects we construct are specifically designed to help keep you safe on the road, especially in wintertime. In fact, we currently have over $50 million committed to just three winter safety related projects that have been on our needs list for a long time. These include work on the Wallowa Lake Highway, OR 82 at the Minam Curve, plus two large Interstate 84 projects between Pendleton and Ladd Canyon, east of La Grande. A lot of work was done this year and all three contracts will be completed in 2020. In addition, we constructed dozens of other projects along the interstates and other routes throughout the eastern region. You can read all about what took place in 2019 and what we'll be working on in 2020 in this publication.

Safety reminder

Along with working on critical safety projects, our winter maintenance crew will be on the highways day and night to remove snow and apply deicer, sand and salt as needed to improve road conditions. They'll continue to use the new tools we added over the past couple years, such as our tow plows and dual wing plows that can clear two freeway lanes at the same time.

These various projects and winter maintenance operations are only part of the safety equation: we need you to do your part, as well. Wintertime can be especially hazardous with shorter daylight hours, ice, snow, rain and fog that create a host of driving challenges.

Please think about your travel plans before heading out. Check TripCheck.com for road and weather conditions, and see the links to hundreds of highway cameras across the state.

Give yourself extra travel time. If conditions are extreme, consider postponing the trip until the weather improves. Heed the warnings and driving tips enclosed in this publication and make sure you've done everything possible to keep you and your loved ones safe on the road.

In closing, I want to thank you for your continued commitment to safe driving as you enjoy what beautiful eastern Oregon has to offer.

Wishing you a joyous, safe winter season,

Craig Sipp
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Eastern Oregon Regional Manager