

Oregon City Bridge construction leads to two year closure

ALISON FIELDHOUSE

Starting in 2010, say goodbye to early morning or after school trips to Dutch Bros. The Oregon City Bridge will undergo construction that will not finish until 2012. Fourteen thousand cars drive over the Oregon City Bridge on a daily basis and 230 bicyclists and pedestrians travel across each day. The bridge is a shortcut for many.

So what will this mean for regular bridge users?

"The bridge will not be accessible for two years, but there are alternate routes. Just take I-205 North onto the Abernethy Bridge and from there, enter into Oregon City using Highway 99 East," Susan Hanson, Community Affairs Coordinator for Region One, said. The alternate route is a longer drive, but only slightly; it is a block further away.

Funding for the bridge is 90% Federal and 10% state funds. No funds came from the stimulus money.

The current bridge is made of a steel base encased within a layer of concrete called Gunite. The bridge has held up since 1922, but the Oregon Department of Transportation on one of its routine bridge checks determined that it was finally time for it to be fixed. A new



In 2010, the Oregon City Bridge will be closed for construction. The bridge was first opened on Jan. 1, 1923 and served as a shortcut for many commuters. Construction will not be completed until 2012.

bridge will not be built.

"The bridge will remain the same as it is now because we are simply fixing up the bridge. It will however be slightly wider, but not much, so that fewer side mirrors are taken off," Hanson said. Because the OC Bridge has been registered in the National Register of Historic Places, it will not be torn down, but renovated.

Although the bridge will be closed, ODOT will be providing shuttles for any bicyclists and pedestrians that need to travel to Oregon City. There were a couple of options that were debated, including ferrying people across and allowing use of

Photo by Libby Kara

the bridge. However, there will be too much equipment working on the bridge for there to be room for cars to use the bridge while it is under renovation.

The Oregon City Bridge will be closed, but that does not mean the city itself will also be closed. The businesses and restaurants will still be open and fully serviceable.

"We've been working with the local merchants to ensure that people are aware that businesses are still open. Oregon City will still be accessible even though the bridge will be closed,"

Hanson said. Many students who use the bridge will have to find another way to access the town. There is no doubt that the reconstruction will be beneficial, but it will be inconvenient for many of the people who use the bridge daily.

"I think it's good that the bridge is being closed and fixed. It needs a lot of work and every time I drive over, I don't have the greatest sense of stability," Anik Shrestha, senior, said. "It's a known fact that the Oregon City Bridge has parts that are crumbling and could use a new paint job."

New Primary School looks to set itself apart from other schools in the district

New Primary School

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According to Woehl, this building will accomplish at least the silver rating and will most likely use solar paneling, eco-friendly building materials and a water reuse system. The architects building the school have worked with West Linn-Wilsonville for over 20 years and have designed many of the schools including West Linn High School.

"We have a little over 300 over capacity in the district at the primary level," Woehl said. Portable classrooms have had to be utilized at Willamette and Stafford Primary Schools. One of the main goals of building the new school, according to Woehl, is to eliminate the portable classrooms.

The building site — referred to as the Erickson property will be on a patch of land south of Hidden Springs, on the North side of Rosemont Road. This land was purchased by the school district in 1988 and set aside for a school if there was ever a need.

The inside of the school will be drastically different from current schools. The library

will feature what Woehl refers to as a "Multidimensional Library." It will use the floor, walls, ceiling and lofts to create a more open space. It will be two stories with a slide going from the upper level to the lower level. There will be several little cubby holes in which to read, with little forts indoors.

The changes will not end there. There will be no cafeteria, either. The idea behind this will be that students will use the porch areas between classrooms as places to eat. As a result, the gymnasium will have a different design as well, which will include using it as a place to eat. There will be a stage that children can use during lunch time.

This school will hopefully be open for the 2011 school year, but because of some delays in the voting process on the annexation of the property, construction may not begin until this coming summer. As for the name, Woehl says that the School Board will choose it, but there will be a process in which the community can help to choose the name. The land where the school is to be built sits on the wetlands,

just beyond the city boundary of West Linn. "There are no name choices as of yet, but I'm sure the community will come up with a great one," Woehl said.

"We're trying to leave it very much in its natural space," Woehl said. After a vote was passed in early September added the land to the city of West Linn. Without the land being part of the city, it could not cultivate a West Linn School. The land itself will influence the building of the school. There is a stream running through the property and according to Woehl, will be incorporated into the playground.

"Most playgrounds are just grass, but we plan to use the trees in the property and have it feature tree forts," Woehl said.

With any addition to the school system, there are boundary line changes. But West Linn-Wilsonville has what Woehl calls "soft boundary lines" which means that regardless of attendance areas, students have choices in which schools they attend. As of now, the school will feed into Rosemont Ridge Middle School.

Vocalists chosen for Honors Choir

ELISE BROWN

The All Northwest Honor Choir is made up of the best of the best singers from Alaska, Washington, Montana, Wyoming, Idaho and Oregon. Oliver Muggli and Lauren Wilkinson, freshmen, were recently selected to join to the All Northwest Youth Choir. Hannah Stout and Sam Anderson, seniors, were selected for the All Northwest Women's Choir and All Northwest Men's Honor Choir, respectively.

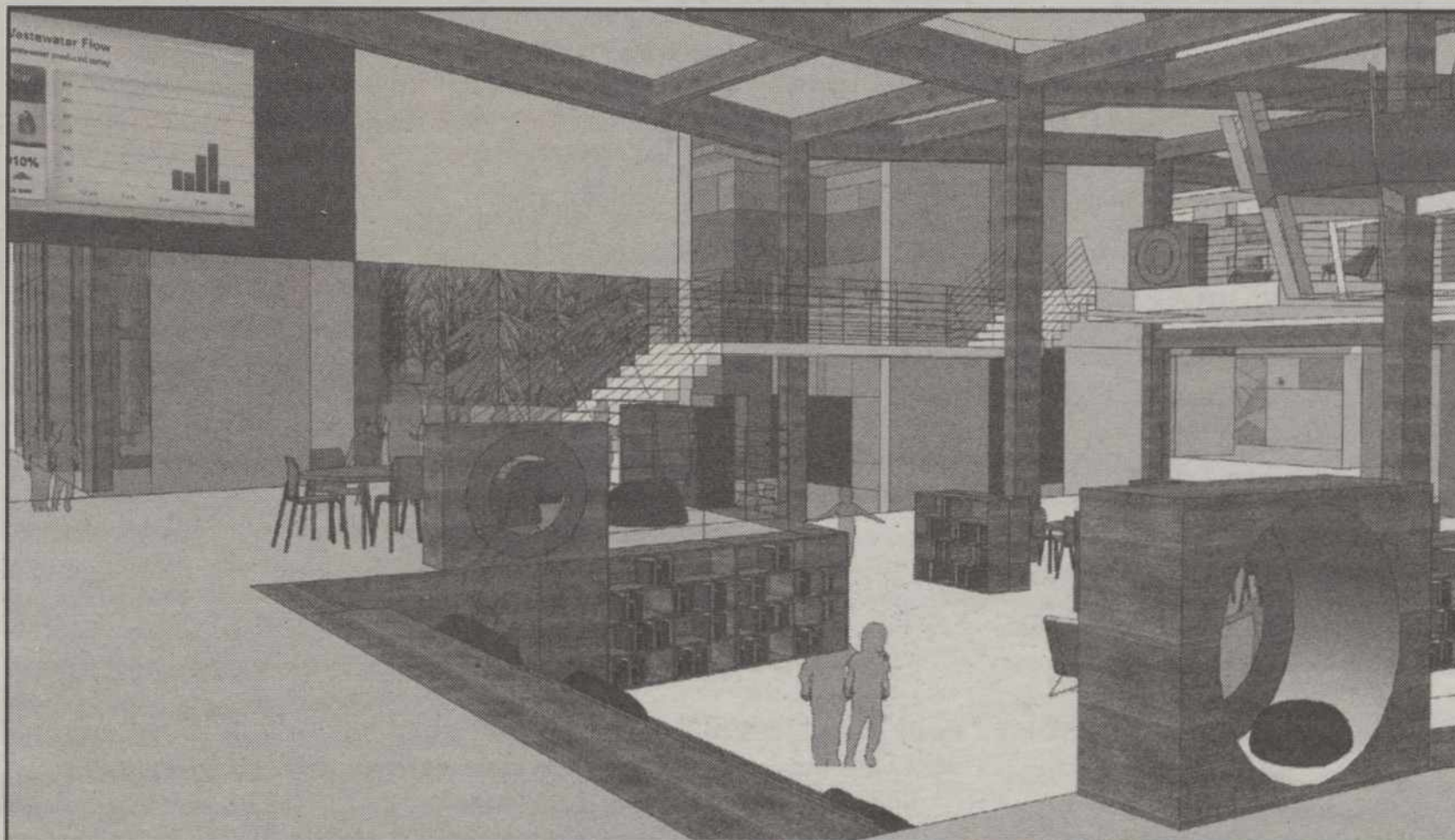
All four auditioned at the beginning of the school year by recording an audition tape in class with Barbara Fontana, choir director. "We had to record ourselves singing some scales and 'America the Beautiful,' then we sent all the tapes to the Northwest Honor Choir office," Muggli said.

"The audition process is designed to test their accuracy of pitch, beautiful vocal tone, and technical skill," Fontana said. "1500 to 1800 people audition every year. The Men's and Women's Honor Choirs have 100 singers each and the Youth Choir has about 160." The Men's and Women's Choirs are made up of students in grades 10-12, and the Youth Choir includes students in grades seven through nine.

The All Northwest Honor Choirs are sponsored by the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA), of which Fontana is a member. Every year, Fontana encourages students to make an audition tape. Students who audition must have behavior in good standing, which the choir teacher and principal must confirm for the All Northwest Honor Choir directors.

Once accepted into the Honor Choir, the participants receive the sheet music for what they will perform and practice on their own time. Internationally recognized guest conductors are hired by the ACDA to rehearse the choirs in a three day workshop that is held at the same time as the NW Choral Directors Conference. The conference then concludes with a Gala Concert featuring each honor choir. The All Northwest Honor Choir will perform in Seattle, Wash., in March 2010.

"It's fun to meet new people and meet new voices," said Stout, a veteran of the choir. She was in the Youth Choir in eighth grade and the Women's Choir her sophomore year. "It's a place for great singers to perfect their singing with other great singers."



Graphic courtesy of Dull Olson Weekes Architects

Plans are underway for the new LEED certified primary school, including a multidimensional library, complete with indoor forts. The design of the new school differs from all others in the district, including a gym with a stage students can use during lunch, and no cafeteria.