

'Every time we find a home they kick us out'

ODOT carried out eight site restorations in 16 days. Here's the story of one.



On Monday, Nov. 15, ODOT officials and local law enforcement officers told Indian School Road campers that they had 26 hours to find a new place to live. Photo by JOEY CAPPELLETTI of Keizertimes

By **Joey Cappelletti**
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Less than a half-mile east of Keizer Station, on the outskirts of Salem, sits a homeless camp. The camp is located along Indian School Road on land

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owned by the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT). At 8 a.m. on Monday, Nov. 15, residents at the camp were told that they had until 10 a.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 16 to vacate the premises. ODOT calls these sweeps of camps "site restorations."

Between Nov. 2 and Nov. 17, ODOT carried out eight site restorations in Marion County. This is the story of one.

Tuesday, Nov. 16 at 9 a.m.

Residents of an Indian School Road encampment race against the clock. Occupants must leave by 10 a.m. — or risk losing their homes.

"Is there something you can do to help us?" a woman asks me. "We just need more time. We will move, we just need more time. I can't lose my RV."

The woman's RV is trapped. It's been parked at the end of Indian School Road for around four months, she says. In front of it sits four cars, all of which look like they haven't moved in months. To the left of the RV is Indian School Road, blocked by thick metal beams installed the day before. Once the cleanup effort is complete, a metal rope will be strung through the beams to ensure no one can camp on the land going forward.

ODOT officials, Oregon State Police

and Salem Police stand along the road and watch the campers.

"It seems like every time we find a home they want to kick us out," said Tim, a man staying at the camp. "I'm tired of getting used to a spot and then getting kicked out just because of other people's wrongdoings or people being lazy."

Next to Tim is his bike, which carries his belongings strapped on the back. I ask him if I can take a photo of his bike. "No," Tim says. "It isn't something I'm proud of."

See **CAMP**, page 3



A Salem police officer and state trooper watch over as campers pack their belongings into a car on Nov. 16. Photo by JOEY CAPPELLETTI of Keizertimes