

# Highway becomes a memorial to Middle East vets

## Latest sign unveiled at Camp Rilea

By ERICK BENDEL  
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — When Oregon House Bill 2036 became law last spring, U.S. Highway 101 became a 338-mile-long memorial to the veterans who served in the Gulf War, the War in Afghanistan and the Iraq War.

But the highway signs honoring the state's youngest veterans have only just started appearing.

The first of 11 planned signs — five facing northbound and six southbound — went up last month near the south end of Warrenton.

And the second sign — soon to be installed near Arch Cape — was unveiled Saturday morning during an indoor dedication ceremony at Camp Rilea headquarters before a roomful of veterans, their families, local dignitaries and supporters.

"Oregon is a great state for honoring veterans," said Dick Tobiason, a Vietnam War veteran and chairman of the non-profit Bend Heroes Foundation, which has led the charge to designate the state's scenic highways as veterans memorial highways.



Retired Lt. Cmdr. Marc Warren, left, and Andrea Larson Perez, right, assisted by service members, unveil the latest U.S. Highway 101 sign honoring the U.S. veterans who have served in wars since 1990. Perez, who wrote a book on Camp Rilea, paid for the first sign, installed last month.

Erick Bengel/The Daily Astorian

### Honoring the living

The state law also designated U.S. Highway 395 as World War I Veterans Memorial Highway, and Interstate 5 as Korean War Veterans Memorial Highway and Purple Heart Trail. They join U.S. Highway 97 and Interstate 84 — known as World War II Veterans Historic Highway and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway — as a way

to recognize veterans from border to border.

Of the 331,600 veterans living in Oregon — almost 1 in 12 Oregonians — nearly 90,000 served in the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan or Iraq wars, including more than 4,000 now living in Clatsop County, according to the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs.

The idea behind the Highway 101 signs — which read

"Persian Gulf, Afghanistan, and Iraq Veterans Memorial Highway" — is to honor the veterans who served in the Middle East while most of the men and women are still alive.

However, "these are not just Oregon veterans we honor with these highway signs," Tobiason said. Rather, the signs belong to any U.S. soldier who fought in the great wars of the last century. "That's for everybody."

# Project Homeless Connect serves as a crucial lifeline for homeless

## Annual event connects homeless, near-homeless to resources

By KATHERINE LACAZE  
EO Media Group

SEASIDE — How does a homeless person cash a check, get immunizations or stay fed?

Clatsop Community Action is hosting the seventh annual Project Homeless Connect. Jessica Maclay Memorial from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Jan. 29 to help those in need get connected to information, resources and services. Assistance will be available to connect participants to housing, mail service, food stamps, identification, Social Security, mental health services, employment, education and legal aid.

More than 40 nonprofit, governmental and faith-based agencies will attend the event at the Seaside Convention Center and provide services including medical screenings, hearing tests, eye exams, immunizations, haircuts, personal care items, clothing vouchers and a hot meal.

"It's a venue to make it easy for people who are looking for services to get them,"



Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

Kallie Linder, from Salon Boheme, cuts Mark Jenkin's hair during the Project Homeless Connect event at the Seaside Convention Center last year.

Clatsop Community Action Director Elaine Bruce said.

The Sunset Empire Transportation District designated Jan. 29 as a Ridership Appreciation Day. All bus services in Clatsop County will be at no cost to riders for the entire day, making it easier for people to access the event even if they are not from Seaside.

"Homeless and especially near-homeless people — those at imminent risk of becoming homeless — are encouraged to attend this free event," according to a news release from Clatsop Community Action.

There are many ways to define homelessness, Bruce said, and it includes people living with others or at motels or hotels because they lost their own housing or those who are doubled up,

and to recognize her dedication and compassionate service to others.

For Clatsop Community Action, winter is the best time to host the event because the organization gets the most participation from those needing and seeking services, Bruce said. In fact, she added, "it seems like the worse the weather, the better the participation." People have more urgency to seek resources during the winter, when the weather is rainy and cold.

### Different stations

About 200 people attend the event seeking at least one service.

Participants first check in and have a preliminary discussion with Clatsop Community Action staff about what they're looking for. Volunteers then lead the participants to different stations where they can talk to staff members from the various agencies and organizations or receive the services they need.

"It's a real fun event," Bruce said, adding it also provides a chance for the different community partners to network. "Not one single entity can do everything."

Clatsop Community Action is in need of 100 volunteers to help with the program. To sign up, contact Viviana Matthews at 503-325-1400, ext. 1031.

which is becoming more common among youth in the county. In 2015, Clatsop County recorded 517 homeless families and 1,005 individuals. Of those, 278 people were younger than 18.

### Nationwide initiative

Project Homeless Connect, founded in San Francisco in 2004, is now a nationwide initiative that takes place in a numerous cities. The individual events vary in size, content and frequency, but have the same goals.

In February 2011, 30-year-old Jessica Maclay, the originator and organizer of Clatsop County's first two Project Homeless Connect events, died from injuries sustained in a car accident near Seaside. The local event was renamed in her memory

### 'Never going to forget'

Ten years ago, Tobiason and Bob Maxwell — a 95-year-old WWII veteran and the nation's most senior living Medal of Honor recipient, who now resides in Bend — set out to create a war memorial highway for every war from WWI onward, representing the roughly 480,000 Oregonians who served in them.

After meetings with three governors, working with legislators and partnering with the state Department of Transportation and other veterans organizations, the vision is almost fully realized.

"We're never going to forget any veteran in Oregon that served during war," Tobiason said. "These highways will make sure that they're honored and (let) the public know we care about them."

Though veterans groups have donated to the signage project, the Bend Heroes Foundation wants county commissioners to publicly support the signs.

"County commissioners speak for their citizens," Tobiason said. "We'd rather have citizens honoring veterans than veterans paying to honor themselves."

The signs — each one 4 feet high by 8 feet wide — cost \$900 to fabricate and install. The foundation needs between \$5,000 and \$6,000 to finish the signage for highways 101 and 395.

The money for the first Clatsop County sign came from Andrea Larson Perez, wife of former Camp Rilea Post Commander Dean Perez and author of a book on the camp's history. The city of Warrenton, VFW Post 10580 and Astoria resident Gordon Treber Sr., the father of Sgt. James Treber, who was killed in Afghanistan in 2008, paid for the second.

### Public thanks

State Sen. Brian Boquist, R-Dallas, the chairman of the Veterans and Emergency Preparedness Committee, wrote for the occasion: "Dedicating roadways in honor of veterans is a small gesture with a large purpose: it is one of the most public ways a society can remember its veterans and say 'thank you.'"

Veterans who served during both wartime and peacetime are memorialized on Oregon's highways by the Blue Star Memorial Highway signs posted at rest stops.

Rob Walker, a veteran of Iraq and director of the Bend Heroes Foundation, testified about the project in Salem. When he vacations at the Oregon Coast with his wife and 7-month-old son, Jack, the signs will remind him and his family that the state cares about his service, he said.

"I'm going to be extremely proud when (Jack) sees it and understands what it means, not only to me but to him as well," Walker said.



Katherine Lacaze/EO Media Group

Nina Cervantes and Garrett Haskins, of Astoria, welcomed their son Gregory Michael Haskins to the world at 1:01 a.m. Jan. 4. Gregory was the first baby born at Providence Seaside Hospital in 2016.

# Astoria couple welcomes first baby of 2016 at Providence

By KATHERINE LACAZE  
EO Media Group

SEASIDE — Providence Seaside Hospital welcomed its first baby of the new year when an Astoria mother delivered her son early last week.

Nina Cervantes, 19, arrived at the hospital at noon Jan. 3 and about 13 hours later, at 1:01 a.m. on Jan. 4, she gave birth to Gregory Michael Haskins, an 8-pound, 13-ounce boy.

Gregory was born about three weeks prior to his Jan. 26 due date. Cervantes said she hoped he might arrive Jan. 3, the day Alaska was granted statehood, as Gregory's father, 24-year-old Garrett Haskins, is originally from Alaska. Nonetheless, she said, she is "very relieved he's here now." As an expecting mother, she added, "you're always worried" about complications with the pregnancy and other things. Now she can rest easy, and focus on caring for her first-born baby.

"I feel so enveloped in love," she said.

Dr. Dominique Greco attended the birth. Stephanie Cervantes, Cervantes' mother and a registered respiratory

therapist at the hospital, was there to support Cervantes during the delivery, along with Haskins.

January already was a busy month for the couple. They moved apartments in Astoria; Haskins finished setting up the new place while Cervantes took care of delivering Gregory.

Cervantes said 2015 was "a really great year," and 2016 promises to be so, as well. She was attending Clatsop Community College part time in the fall of 2015 and was scheduled to start new classes for the winter term this week. Gregory's early arrival, however, will delay her return until the spring term, which gives her three months to enjoy her son and start getting him on a schedule, she said.

The couple chose the name Gregory so their son's first initial would match his father's; Gregory also assumed his father's middle name.

Haskins, who works at Sahara Pizza in Astoria, said he anticipates Gregory, who is "a big boy already," will be a basketball player someday.

About becoming a first-time father, he said, "I'm so stoked."

# Call for supplies as standoff enters second week

## Militants decline local calls to leave

By RICK BOWMER  
Associated Press

BURNS — The occupation of national wildlife area by a small, armed group upset over federal land policies stretched into its second week as the mother of the group's leader asked supporters to send supplies — everything from warm blankets to coffee creamer.

The group that seized the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon's high desert country on Jan. 2 planned no media briefings. It was quiet at the entrance to the refuge Sunday.

The leader of the occupation, Ammon Bundy, has repeatedly rejected calls to leave buildings at the refuge despite pleas from the county sheriff,

from many local residents and from Oregon's governor, among others. He has said the group will leave when there is a plan to transfer control of federal land to locals.

So far, the authorities have not moved in to remove Bundy's group. Ammon Bundy is the son of rancher Cliven Bundy, who was involved in a 2014 Nevada standoff with the government over grazing rights.

On Saturday, Ammon Bundy's mother, Carol Bundy, sent an email to supporters asking them to send her son's group supplies from a list of more than 80 items, including sleeping bags, wool socks, cigarettes, toiletries, food, coffee and "French Vanilla Creamer."

An Oregon state legislator met with the group on Saturday, despite requests from local officials that he not do so.

State Rep. Dallas Heard, a Republican from Roseburg, talked with the group, The

Oregonian reported. Heard's legislative district is in western Oregon, outside the area where the standoff is occurring. Rep. Cliff Bentz, the Republican state representative whose district includes the wildlife refuge, told Heard not to come because it would be "inappropriate."

Harney County Judge Steven Grasty, another local official, says he too advised Bentz against the visit. Grasty said Bentz and five other out-of-state elected officials from Washington state, Idaho and Nevada accompanied Heard. It wasn't clear who the other elected officials were. Heard did not return a call Sunday from The Associated Press.

Also Saturday a separate group of armed men arrived but left several hours later after occupation leaders told them they weren't needed.

The Pacific Patriot Network showed up Saturday in a convoy of about 18 vehicles, carrying rifles and handguns and dressed in military attire and bulletproof vests. They said they were there to help with security. They departed the refuge area after LaVoy Finicum said the network's help was appreciated, but "we want the long guns put away."

The standoff is the latest flare up of tensions over federal management of Western lands.

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