

Motorists at greater risk in road work zones

State aims to raise awareness

By PARIS ACHEN
Capital Bureau

PORTLAND — When Brodie Harvey works onsite at a highway project, he often thinks of his former Knife River colleague, Ron Davis, who was struck by a truck while working on northbound Interstate 5 north of Aurora nearly a year ago.

Davis eventually died from his injuries. Harvey, a project manager with the national highway construction contracting company, said he even questioned whether he wanted to continue in his chosen profession.

“It was a very sad, tragic event,” said Harvey, an Albany resident. “It made me question whether I really wanted to be out there on the highways and interstates working, with how dangerous it can be.”

While construction workers struck down in work zones make headlines, motorists approaching work zones are much more likely to be injured than workers, said Matt Garrett, director of the Oregon Department of Transportation.

He offered a staggering statistic: Someone is injured an average of every 17 hours in a road construction work zone in Oregon, a state with a population of 4.1 million.

Analysis of state crash data from 2012 to 2016 shows that an average of five people die each year in work zones, while about 437 people are injured. The majority of the injuries were among motorists, Garrett said. More than 500 crashes occur each year in work zones.

Garrett held a news conference Thursday at an Interstate 5 paving and auxiliary lane project in Tualatin, where, he said, five people already have been injured in that work zone since February.

Milwaukie resident Justin Brandon, a Department of Transportation coordinator for the project manager’s office, said he has seen some of the damaged vehicles after the recent crashes.

“A lot of our work takes place at night, and that’s when the accidents have mainly been happening,” Brandon said. “That’s one of the biggest issues we have working at night: It’s dark. People are driving. They want to get home, and it’s extremely dangerous.”

Speed reduction signs are posted in the work zone, but motorists sometimes fail to see the signs or choose not to follow them.

“Some drivers are distracted. Sometimes, they’re drunk. A lot of times, they’re tired,” Brandon said. “All of these things add up, and it’s extremely dangerous out there, working feet away from vehicles moving 65 miles an hour, 70 miles an hour.”

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Paris Achen/Capital Bureau
Knife River project manager Brodie Harvey and his son, Beau, 9, of Albany.



Photos by Katie Frankowicz/The Daily Astorian

Master gardener trainees Janet Willoughby, left, and Diane McKenzie spend the first weekend in May working in the demonstration garden at Alderbrook Park.

PRESERVING PARKS

Groups will pitch park adoptions

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

It’s been just over four months since the Astoria City Council approved three park adoptions.

Tonight, two groups will make pitches to city councilors for two new park adoptions in an effort to preserve sites the city has considered putting up for sale: Birch Field in Alderbrook and the Custom House near Safeway.

Classed as underutilized in a 2016 parks master plan, both are properties the council believed could be developed into something else, relieving the Parks and Recreation Department from the responsibility of caring for them.

In February, the council directed city staff to look into delisting Birch Field, a little-used ball field, as a park. Since then, Alderbrook neighbors organized a group to adopt the field. Their goal, they say, is to maintain and improve the field as a city park. The Lower Columbia Preservation Society hopes to tackle the Custom House, an historic reconstruction of the first U.S. Custom House west of the Rocky Mountains with parkland surrounding it.

Two of the three parks recently granted adoption agreements were in the same situation, but are off the list



Volunteers plant native sedums along a wall in the Tidal Rock Park site.

for now, in part because of the maintenance and beautification agreements in place with city residents.

Tiny Post Office Park, on 15th Street between Exchange Street and Franklin Avenue, is off the list permanently. The council agreed with city staff that the site, with its several layers of historic designations, would have been difficult to sell. A five-year maintenance agreement with neighboring bed-and-breakfast owners Pam and Dave Armstrong sealed the decision.

Tidal Rock Park, adopted by a group of artists who had landed a grant from the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts to improve the site, could still be considered for sale again. Councilors noted it could be a complex site to develop, however.

Both sites have undergone sig-

nificant transformations since the City Council approved the adoption agreements.

Post Office Park is tidy and well-groomed. Just down the road at Tidal Rock, artists Jessica Schleif, Brenda Harper and Agnes Field have been holding regular planting and clean-up events at the sunken and long-neglected park near Fort George Brewery. The rock that gives the park its name, used by mariners as a high tide marker, is visible again, freed from undergrowth that had almost swallowed it up.

Alderbrook Park, the third park adoption, was not going to go up for sale, but it has also been transformed because of the adoption agreement.

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‘TO HAVE THIS AVAILABLE TO THE COMMUNITY, I THINK IS JUST WORTH ITS WEIGHT IN GOLD.’

Janet Willoughby | master gardener trainee, speaking about a learning and demonstration garden at Alderbrook Park established by Clatsop County Master Gardeners

Educator inspires in English, Spanish



Edward Stratton/The Daily Astorian

Fernando Rojas-Galvan teaches Spanish, English and General Education Development classes at Clatsop Community College.

Rojas-Galvan also does work as a translator

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

Fernando Rojas-Galvan is ready to help students at Clatsop Community College, whether they speak English or Spanish.

The recent hire splits his time teaching Spanish, English and General Education Development classes for the college. Rojas-Galvan commutes



between Astoria and Portland, where his two youngest children are sixth and 10th graders, and his wife a high school Spanish instructor. He rents a room several blocks from campus but hopes to one day buy a house in Astoria, after his daughter finishes high school.

A Hood River native, Rojas-Galvan earned a bachelor’s from the University of

Portland. He and his wife met during an advanced Spanish grammar course he was helping to teach as a graduate student at the University of New Mexico.

“I also lived in Nebraska, where my wife is from,” he said. “We were eager to get back to Oregon.”

Moving back during an economic downturn, Rojas-Galvan was working up to three different jobs. Before being hired by the college, he had been commuting between Portland and Salem, where he

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