

# ODOT will expand use of salt on dangerous winter roads

By **CLAIRE WITCOMBE**  
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Chance of snow? Expect a sprinkling of salt too.

On the first 11 miles of Interstate 5 north of the California border, the average number of winter crashes dropped from 115 to 54 after the state's transportation department started using solid salt on a trial basis.

Because of the apparent success of that pilot program and directives from the Legislature, the state will continue to use salt sparingly on some major roadways this winter.

While it can be difficult to peg the exact cause of crashes, and the figures fluctuate from year to year, officials found that the two areas they tested as part of a pilot program from 2012 to 2017 saw a decline in crashes after they tried salt.

"It was amazing to see," said Dave Thompson, a spokesman for the Oregon Department of Transportation. "The salt was really effective, and still we wanted to minimize its use."

ODOT will have salt on hand for the first 100 miles of the freeway north of California, on 200 miles of Interstate 84 and in hilly parts of the Portland metro area, as well as a 121-mile stretch of U.S. 95 in southeastern Oregon between Nevada and Idaho that was tested as part of the pilot program.

Since the 1990s, the state has used a liquid chemical deicer, which isn't always enough to keep snow and ice from bonding to pavement, ODOT says.

The state has largely avoided solid salt, which can have deleterious environmental effects and is expensive to store. Solid salt has the same chemical composition — sodium chloride — as table salt.

Salt, through road runoff, can make its way into surface water, groundwater and soil, which can make it harder for plants to absorb water. It can also corrode roads, bridges and vehicles more quickly.

But salt can also be very effective, especially in certain conditions, like freezing rain, which the transportation agency says is growing more common in Oregon. Salt will be just one component of the state's winter maintenance plans.



Courtesy Oregon Department of Transportation

**Results of a test program suggest that using salt can reduce weather-related crashes. ODOT will have salt on hand for the first 100 miles of Interstate 5 north of California, on 200 miles of Interstate 84 and in hilly parts of the Portland metro area, as well as a 121-mile stretch of U.S. 95 in southeastern Oregon between Nevada and Idaho.**

## Winter weather expected to hit on Thanksgiving

East Oregonian

Eastern Oregon residents can expect some winter weather on Thanksgiving Day, and are advised to plan ahead and get on the roads early.

The Oregon Department of Transportation advised that the area may see some wind, rain, ice, snow and fog, which may present driving challenges for those trying to travel for the holiday. Drivers are advised to pay attention to weather and road conditions, and stay aware of weather warnings and advisories.

ODOT District 13 manager Ace Clark said the agency will have crews on the highway plowing snow and applying sand and salt as needed.

"Please plan extra travel time, be prepared for winter weather and drive according to the conditions of the road. We want everyone to get to their destination safely," he said.

Through the five years of the pilot program, the department wanted to see whether a small amount of salt could improve highway conditions and cut down on serious and fatal crashes.

On average, in areas tested near the California border, state crews applied about 246 pounds of salt per lane mile. In the stretch of U.S. 95 in southeastern Oregon, they applied about 190 pounds per mile.

A November 2017 report on the pilot project recommended between 150 and 300 pounds of salt should be applied per lane mile. ODOT was also required to use the least amount of salt possible to meet its goals, depending on weather and road conditions.

The winter of 2016-17, which buried the Portland area and Willamette Valley

in snow and ice, prompted the department to consider using salt more widely, Thompson said.

And last year, lawmakers directed the state's Transportation Commission to develop a winter maintenance plan that included the use of salt or another solid de-icer.

The transportation department may use salt in Portland, Salem and Eugene as it sees fit, Thompson said.

The agency will also monitor high-traffic areas and places that get a lot of snow.

In Salem, the state maintains parts of Interstate 5 and sections of U.S. Highway 22, said Mark Becktel, the city's public works operations manager.

But the city of Salem has no plans to use solid salt this winter, Becktel said.

The city doesn't use rock salt but it does use magnesium chloride, another type of salt suspended in liquid.

Becktel said the city's forecasters are expecting more ice than snow.

"The issues we've been warned to be more prepared for are black ice and ice storms, wind storms, not so much the occurrence of snow," Becktel said. "We would prepare for a full winter either way."

Not all snow is created equal. The Willamette Valley is warmer and much more humid than areas east of the Cascades.

Central Oregon, which typically sees a lot of snow, is much drier and colder, and powdery snow doesn't respond as well to solid salt, Thompson said.

Salt has other drawbacks. Storing it properly can be pricey. The transportation department has requested more money in the upcoming two-year budget for more salt storage.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife is concerned that using salt could attract animals to roads, resulting in more crashes.

But the transportation department found no correlation between using salt on the road and accidents involving animals.

The state's salt plan may change in the coming years.

"I expect we'll keep evolving this after the next year or two or three as we gain more experience, learn new lessons," Thompson said.

## HERMISTON

# Hermiston Realty to stay open after Donn Walls' death

By **JADE MCDOWELL**  
East Oregonian

Hermiston Realty staff are in mourning after principal broker Donn Walls died Friday.

Walls, 79, was a staple of Hermiston's real estate community. He was born in La Grande, graduated from Umatilla High School and got a degree in animal science



Donn Walls

from Oregon State University before eventually returning to the Hermiston area in 1988. He worked for Universal Realty and bought Century 21, which eventually became Hermiston Realty in 2001.

Patty Looman, office manager for Hermiston Realty, and Travis Rock, who handles the Hermiston Property Management side of the business, said Walls was active in the community. He was president-elect of the Kiwanis Club and heavily involved in Umatilla High School's alumni association.

His first love, they said, was real estate. But he also loved Arabian horses, orchids, going to Tri-Cities Americans hockey games and playing his lucky wild cherry machine at the casino.

"He was a very social person," Rock said. "Everyone was his friend."

Looman knew Walls for 28 years, and Rock worked with him for more than 30. While Walls never mar-

ried or had children of his own, Looman said he was like family to her and to other co-workers. His clients were very important to him too.

"He was a very charismatic person and worked hard for his clients," she said.

Walls received many awards over his career, including Columbia Basin

Realtors' Realtor of the Year in 2008. Looman said not only did Walls work tirelessly for his clients, but it helped that he was so connected to everyone in the community and knew the history of so many properties.

Hermiston Realty agent Sandy Allen said she got her real estate license the same year Walls did.

"He lived and breathed real estate," she said.

Allen will be stepping up into the role of principal broker for the business.

It has been a rough time for staff — they were still having to inform people calling the office on Tuesday that Walls had passed away — but they said Hermiston Realty will continue to operate with "business as usual."

"He would have wanted us to continue on," Rock said.

A celebration of life service for Walls will be held Monday at 10 a.m. in the Burns Mortuary chapel in Hermiston.

## COMING EVENTS

**WEDNESDAY, NOV. 21**  
**CUSTOMER APPRECIATION SALE**, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Salvation Army Thrift Store, 1805 S.W. Court Ave., Pendleton. Everything 50 percent off storewide. Proceeds benefit Salvation Army community programs. Volunteers welcome. (Bill Dochnahl 509-521-7388)

**THURSDAY, NOV. 22**  
**COMMUNITY FELLOWSHIP DINNER**, 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Hermiston High School commons, 600 S. First St., Hermiston. Free traditional Thanksgiving dinner for all residents.

**COMMUNITY THANKSGIVING DINNER**, 12-2 p.m., Salvation Army, 150 S.E. Emigrant Ave., Pendleton. Free and open to everyone. Delivery available for seniors and disabled citizens. (541-276-3369)

**COMMUNITY THANKSGIVING MEAL**, 1 p.m., All Saints Episcopal Church parish hall, 140 W. Church St., Heppner. Everyone welcome. Free.

**COMMUNITY THANKSGIVING DINNER**, 1 p.m., Life Church of Pilot Rock, 222 S.W. Third St., Pilot Rock. Donation of side dish or dessert welcome, but not required. Non-perishable food or cash donations will be distributed by the Pilot Rock Food Pantry. Free. (Sheila Buckley 541-215-7974)

**COMMUNITY THANKSGIVING DINNER**, 1:30-4 p.m., Boardman Senior Center, 100 Tanton St., Boardman. Praise service at 1:30 p.m., dinner served from 2-4 p.m. Free and open to everyone. (503-724-8823, 503-307-5646 or 541-481-3257)

**COMMUNITY THANKSGIVING DINNER**, 4-6 p.m., First Christian Church, 518 S. Main St., Milton-Freewater. Turkey and all the trimmings, free for all community members. (Janet Collins 541-938-3854)

**FIDDLER'S NIGHT**, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Avamere Assisted Living, 980 W. Highland Ave., Hermiston. Enjoy light refreshments, listen to some favorite oldies or join in the jam session. All ages welcome. (Lori 541-567-3141)

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 23**  
**FREE FISHING DAY**, 7 a.m.-8 p.m., all fishable waters, in Oregon including, Pendleton. No fishing, crabbing or clamming tags or licenses required on Free Fishing Days, but all other regulations apply including closures, bag limits and size restrictions. (Michelle Dennehy 503-947-6022)

**WALKING FOR WELLNESS**, 8:30-9:30 a.m., Pendleton Recreation Center, 510 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton. Get some exercise even when the weather is bad. Free. (Csey Brown 541-276-8100)

## Late volunteer surge allows Warming Station to open

East Oregonian

The Hermiston Warming Station was able to open Monday after all.

The nonprofit emergency shelter had pushed its opening date back from Nov. 19 to Dec. 1 due to lack of volunteers. But after news of the shortage traveled, a late surge of volunteers showed up to the last round of training sessions

over the weekend.

Warming Station board chair Teesie Hill said she wanted to thank everyone who responded to the need. She now has 141 trained volunteers on the roster, which should be enough to keep the warming station open every day.

Hill said last year it served 84 different people throughout the winter, from homeless residents to stranded travelers

to families whose heat went out. People in need of shelter for the night can go to the station in the evenings at 1075 S. Highway 395, across from Tower Apartments. Check-in is from 7:30-9 p.m., although volunteers will admit people after that if they're brought by police, social workers or clergy.

The warming station does not serve meals, but does provide guests with hot

drinks like coffee and cider and a snack for breakfast as they're leaving. Donations of those items, along with cleaning supplies, laundry supplies, toiletries, ear plugs, socks, gloves and hand warmers are welcome. To donate, call 360-508-4523 to arrange for a drop-off time.

For updates on the Hermiston Warming Station, visit its Facebook page.

## HERMISTON



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WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO BABY JANE? (NR) 12:00\*

CREED II (PG13) 1:00\* 4:00 7:00 10:00

RALPH BREAKS THE INTERNET (PG) 11:50\* 2:20\* 7:20 4:50 9:50

FANTASTIC BEASTS: THE CRIMES OF GRINDELWALD (PG13) 12:40\* 6:40 3:40\* 9:40

INSTANT FAMILY (PG13) 1:30\* 4:10 6:50 9:30

DR. SEUSS' THE GRINCH (PG) 4:40 7:10 9:20

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**11/22**

**Cineplex Show Times**

**\$5 Classic Movie 11/28 • 12pm**

**DAVE**

CREED II (PG13) 1:00\* 4:00 7:00 10:00

RALPH BREAKS THE INTERNET (PG) 11:50\* 2:20\* 7:20 4:50 9:50

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