

Oregon Roads Hit Hard by Weather

Legislative Report By
Senator Ken Jernstedt,
District 28

This winter has not only been one of the coldest and wettest in Oregon's history, it has also been the reason for the state's roads being in their worst condition in years.

Department of Transportation studies indicate that more than 4,400 miles of highways are moderately to extremely deteriorated and more than half the system is approaching or has exceeded its design life. If the Legislature fails to act this session to increase highway revenue, then within two years more than two-thirds of Oregon's 7,600 miles of roadway may be sub-standard.

Good roads cost an estimated \$5,000 per mile for regular maintenance. When a road falls into the extremely deteriorated category, costs skyrocket to \$200,000 per mile for major overlay work.

The Department of Transportation says that cost during the next 10 years to keep up with major road repairs would be almost \$1 billion — significantly more than the proposed \$445 million biennium transportation budget.

Actually only about \$223 million would go to the Highway Division — the rest of the \$445 would be designated for local government, state police, parks and administrative costs. I am one of 52 legislators who have sponsored a resolution to change this by submitting for voters' approval a constitutional change which would limit the use of motor vehicle taxes to highway purposes, highway bond retirement, and administrative costs.

A number of other suggestions have been made as to how to increase funding for highway repair and maintenance. One is to increase the present 7 cents per gallon gas tax a penny a year until it reached a ceiling of 11 cents in 1985. Only three states have lower gas taxes than Oregon's.

Other ideas include a \$10 to



PATCH JOB - Roads on the reservation have suffered from the wet, freezing weather. For the last few weeks Terry Courtney, Jr. and Bobo Miller of the B.I.A. Roads Department have been patching potholes around the community and on the highways. This is the most patching they can remember doing. Spilyay Tymoo photo by CDS

\$15 tax on studded tires; a new car sales tax; increased vehicle registration fees; higher driver's license fees; taxes on horsepower, tires and lubricating oil; a tax of 10 cents per cubic inch displacement — a car with an engine of 100 cubic inches would pay \$10.

And then there is the matter of the disposition of the estimated surplus of at least \$170 million that will be on hand as of July.

Two years ago then-Senator Atiyeh and a few of the rest of us sponsored a bill to return such surpluses to income taxpayers. That measure got nowhere!

Governor Atiyeh's tax plan, which has apparently died in the House Revenue Committee, called for returning this year's surplus to the taxpayers but he now seems inclined to use \$100 million of it for road repair and maintenance.

This is a dilemma which the Legislature is going to have to solve, and solve soon!

I am very interested in knowing how the people of my district feel about this possible use of the surplus and about any of the other suggestions detailed above, and I would very much appreciate hearing from you on this subject.



Spilyay Speaks

TOE NESS

THERE WERE THESE TWO guys driving down this narrow street when they met in the middle of the block and there was not enough room to pass. One of the guys said, "I never back up for any stupid fool." The other guy puts his car in reverse and said, "Oh, that's alright, I always do." YIKES

SS SS SS

THERE WAS THIS GUY who was always late with his accounts receivable statement. One day his fellow employees asked, "What's the reason they don't fire you?" His answer was, "I have the books so messed up they won't dare fire me." YIKES

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HERE IS AN OLD SAYING: "When a man is too old to set a bad example he starts giving good advice." YIKES

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DID YOU KNOW THAT statistics of the National Institute of health shows that the leading cause of disease among laboratory animals is research." YIKES

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THERE WAS THIS POLACK facing the judge one day for a traffic ticket. After the judge read him all of his rights and the charge the judge said, "How do you plead?" The Polack, "On my knees." YIKES

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THERE WAS THIS GUY who said "You know some answering services are very bad. I had a girl working for me as phone operator. When anyone would call she would say, "Why did you call him? No one else does." YIKES

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RAY SAID TO HIS WIFE, "You know I'm glad we have neighbors like we have. With them we don't need a calendar. I know when summer is over because he returns the lawn furniture and wants to borrow my snow shovel." YIKES

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MAC SAID, "I sure used to like to travel by plane, but not anymore." Bob asked, "Why not?" Mac, "It's the long drive to the airport that makes me carsick." YIKES

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Indian News Notes

by Vince Lovett

AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FAVORS END OF INDIAN TREATY RIGHTS:

The Navajo Times recently published the following 1979 policy statement of the American Farm Bureau Federation: "... We support legislation to establish the rule that both Indian and non-Indians have equal rights and responsibilities under the law. All citizens should be required to obey the laws of local, state and national governments. The 'nation unto nation' treatment of Indians should be abolished. We favor abolition of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and termination of special Indian treaty rights by purchase or negotiation for fair compensation.

The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 might serve as a model. Jointly, these steps will end special treatment of Indians and bring them to full equality under the law. In the meantime we urge Congress to clarify the conflict between Indians and non-Indians and to remove any historical liens or encumbrances in the areas of mineral, property and water rights. The Federal Government should not financially support Indians in proceedings to establish property rights.

We are opposed to any legislative approach similar to the Central Arizona Indian Tribal Water Rights Settlement Act of 1976. We are also opposed to any proposal that would establish a special adjudication agency or procedures for the administration of Indian water claims."

NEW STAFF DIRECTOR APPOINTED FOR SENATE INDIAN COMMITTEE:

Senator John Melcher, chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Indian Affairs, has appointed Roy Whitacre of Yerington, Nevada as Committee Staff Director. Whitacre a former aide to Senator Bible and member of the Interior and Insular Affairs staff has been in retirement, "and doing a little consulting" since 1974.

Alan Parker, who has been acting staff director, will remain as staff counsel. Parker has been acting since Ernie Stevens left the position. Whitacre, who is "about 70" said that he grew up with mostly Indian playmates. After 12 years on the Interior Committee, Whitacre worked for two years for Desert Research Staff of the University of Nevada. He subsequently returned to Washington with Senator Bible. In Yerington, he lives on Whitacre Street — named after his family.

COMPANY GIVES UP, AFTER \$32 MILLION INVESTMENT, ON NAVAJO PROJECT:

An official of the Western Coal Gasification Company said the company was walking away from a \$32 million investment and six years of work on a proposed coal gasification plant on the Navajo Reservation. WESCO's general manager Bob Rudzick told Farmington, New Mexico businessmen and officials that the company was closing its Farmington office.

He said the company is now looking at sites in Wyoming for the possible location of a plant. Rudzick said that Navajo tribal officials rejected the firms proposal which would have brought the tribe more than \$750 million in royalty payments, rental fees and taxes under a 25-year lease agreement. Rudzick said that any overtures for reopening negotiations would now have to come from the tribe.

UTES CANCEL WATER AGREEMENTS WITH NON-INDIANS:

Ruby Black, chairwoman of the Ute Indian Tribal Council, told reporters that the tribe was canceling all water agreements with non-Indians, ranging from participation in a huge Federal project to a contract to supply drinking water to the 2,000 population town of Roosevelt. According to a news service report, the tribe was upset that a proposed agreement designed to settle tribal claims in the Uintah Basin has been tied up in a state legislative committee and seemed unlikely to be acted upon.

The compact was drawn up by the tribe's legal counsel after consultation with Federal and state agencies. It dealt with matters such as the tribe's hunting, fishing, taxation and water rights. The State of Utah and Uintah and Duchesne counties are now defendants in a suit over tribal jurisdiction.

The central issue is whether the tribe has legal jurisdiction within the boundaries of the original reservation (4.2 million acres) as established in 1861-64, or just within lands in the basin now held in trust for them by the Federal Government (1.3 million acres), over which tribal control has never been questioned. The present proposed compromise modifies tribal claims of two years ago, limiting Ute jurisdiction in the larger area primarily to jurisdiction over Indians and Indian hunting and fishing rights subject only to tribal control."

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