

Project spanned nearly seven years



File photo

Tribal member Nicholas Atanacio and his friends walk home on a narrow shoulder of Grand Ronde Road in this photo from 2004. The image became an important part of the Tribe's application for a grant to widen the street.



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Trista Phillips, a sixth-grader at Willamina Middle School at Grand Ronde, walks home from school down the newly finished and safer Grand Ronde Road on Monday, Oct. 12.

ROAD continued from front page

five crosswalks along the way. Deep roadside ditches were replaced with storm sewers and the roadway was widened to accommodate bike lanes and sidewalks.

"The design team was fabulous," said Scott about Albany-based Reece and Associates. "Even though this project spanned nearly seven years, they never lost sight of the end game."

Reece also provided innovative design solutions to ensure that areas with limited rights of way still had drainage.

"A special design," said company principal David Reece, "went under the sidewalk. It involved a subsurface drain system with perforated pipe, 20 feet long and 2 to 3 feet deep. So, water that comes to the sidewalk still drains to the storm sewer system."

The state Department of Transportation was heavily involved in the design and plan review for

work at the intersections of Grand Ronde Road and state highways 18 and 22.

"ODOT was extremely cooperative and helpful," Scott said.

Sherwood-based C&M Construction Inc., general contractor for the project, hired two Tribal members Terry Houck and, through a flagging subcontractor, Tyrone Rock. The company also hired community member Sunshine Butler (Siletz).

"They are really good, hard workers," said Project Superintendent Steve Smith, who leaves with a sense of accomplishment, but back to an uncertain economy. "We like them. They've got jobs after this job is over if we have work."

The project required building an entirely new road because there was no base rock under the old roadway.

"It was a full reconstruct of the road," Smith said. "We dug it out and put in all new base rock — 12 inches of rock and four inches of paving. We built a whole new road base the full length."

"You move on to a job like this and it's just chaos. You organize things and try to envisage what it's going to look like. It's always rewarding to drive up and down a new road when it's done. This looks nice and that looks nice. It's a feeling of accomplishment."

In addition, Smith said, "C&M is appreciative of the patience of the homeowners and residents on the road. We inconvenienced them on a daily basis."

While not all neighbors along the road were happy with the work, Tribal member Sue Daniels, who lives in Tribal housing, said, "Sometimes there was a bit of a wait, but I like the way it looks now."

Tribal member Molly Leno, who lives in Bunnsville, said that she didn't even notice until the end when they were working on the intersection at Highway 18. "Sometimes," she said, "it was a pain to go to the Tribal offices."

For Tribal Elder Dean and Christine Mercier, who live on the road, "It was a beautiful job and they worked with us," Christine said.

"I thought in the morning they'd like some coffee, so I brought Sunshine (Butler) a thermos," she said.

The workers later moved a beautiful old rhododendron bush for the Merciers, and Christine responded with a peach pie for the crew. Later, they moved a big carved black bear that was in the way of the sidewalk, and Christine made them banana bread.

"That's why I'm so underfed," said Dean.

"We worked with them and they worked with us," said Christine.

"The project turned out well," said Polk County Administrator Greg Hansen. "It's a much needed safety improvement that will benefit all the people in the area."

The coordination among the many government agencies "went surprisingly well," said Polk County Engineer tech Fred Low. "It was two years. It was a long process."

"It's been a tremendous improvement for the neighborhood. It looks like a whole different community,"

said Bill Gille, Yamhill County engineer.

The beneficial effect of the project on the community came through for Kim Rogers, Tribal Planning and Grants manager, when he saw a mother pushing a stroller along the new sidewalk.

"It's been a lot more positive now that the road's done," said Gus Forster, principal of Willamina Middle School at Grand Ronde, of talk at the school about the roadwork.

"It's been a great addition and a great safety feature for the school. We've got a lot of students coming from Tribal housing, so it's been great for them."

Funding for the project came from:

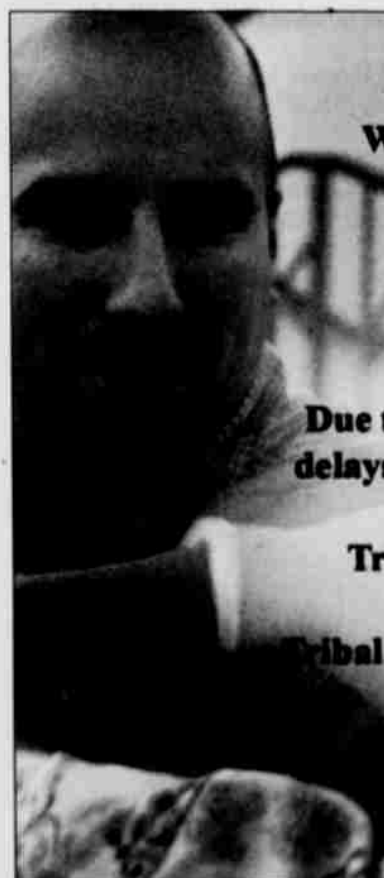
- Bureau of Indian Affairs' (BIA) Indian Reservation Roads program (\$3.5 million);
- BIA High Priority Project grant (\$1 million);
- Two Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Indian Community Development Block grants, one for the sewer main (\$500,000) and one for pedestrian improvements (\$500,000); Tribal matches for water line work in the HUD grants were ultimately reimbursed by the BIA;
- Proceeds from a Polk County road bond to overlay the road (\$200,000);
- Proceeds from a Yamhill County bicycle and pedestrian grant fund (\$115,000);
- An Indian Health Services sewer improvements grant (\$237,000); and
- Tribal funding for all telecom infrastructure improvements (nearly \$350,000).

The \$6.4 million total includes design and construction costs.

The process to formalize rights of way acquisitions was "a huge hurdle," said Scott, and included numerous public meetings over the period from 2004-06.

Scott first brought the project to Tribal Council in 2000. Design work began in 2003. Construction began Aug. 4, 2008.

"This project really transforms the character of the community. We probably saved some lives as well," Scott said. ■



Flu Clinic

Where: Portland Satellite Office
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Portland, Oregon 97239

When: Tuesday, Nov. 10, 2009
Time: 8 A.M.-12 P.M.

Due to limited supplies and delivery delays this clinic may be cancelled at anytime.

Tribal Elders, spouses, and direct descendants only

Tribal ID and Medical Card required

For more information contact
Lisa Archuleta 503-235-4230

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