

'Each community is a mini-project'

ELECTRIC continued
from front page

contractor supplying parts for, installing, operating and maintaining the charging stations, will begin charging a fee to recoup investment and make a profit.

Still, the state anticipates that the owner of an electric car, paying for each charge, will save \$1,700 in a year's time over a gas-powered car that averaged 22.6 mpg in 2008. Electrics run for about three cents a mile compared with the average gas-powered car that runs for about 10 cents a mile, though many variables affect the actual results.

Each electric charging station will have a DC fast charger capable of replenishing an exhausted battery in 30 minutes, as well as a medium speed charger that takes from two to four hours for a complete charge.

Currently, U.S.-made electric vehicles, including the Chevy Volt, require the longer charge, while international models, including the Nissan Leaf, recharge faster.

Ashley Horvat, West Coast Electric Highway Project manager for the Oregon Department of Transportation, which is overseeing the effort for the state, said that driving her Nissan Leaf round-trip between Salem and Medford (458 miles), using the fast charge units, added 1.5 hours to the trip.

"Headwinds are the biggest thing that impacts your mileage," she said.

The Grand Ronde station will be among 22 locations currently slated for installation throughout rural Oregon, with 10 others already installed. Charging stations will be available to electric car drivers every 25 to 30 miles in busier locations of the state and as far as 50 miles between stations in rural areas, Horvat said.

The Electric Highway project in Oregon is being built with three grants totaling more than \$4 mil-



Map created by George Valdez

lion. The 2010 stimulus package allocated \$915,000 and that has already brought 10 stations on line.

A \$2 million U.S. Department of Transportation award will bring another 22 on line by the end of 2012. The Grand Ronde station will be among the second group of charging stations. The scope of an

additional \$1.34 million in federal transportation funds is currently being negotiated, said Horvat.

"Each community (charging station) is a mini-project," she said, including HAZMAT (hazardous materials) pollution concerns, as well as negotiations with the local utility and property owner.

"The average station costs more than \$100,000, with \$50,000 of that being the cost of the equipment. Actual construction takes an average of 17 days," Horvat said.

AeroVironment subcontractor Cascadia PM, based in Olympia, Wash., works with the Oregon Department of Transportation to scout locations for charging stations in Oregon and Washington. Hillsboro-based Quality Plus Services Electrical is subcontractor for most installations, including the one coming in Grand Ronde.

With the support of past and current governors and Oregon's federal senators, the state Department of Transportation has moved forward with infrastructure that aims to encourage more car buyers to go electric.

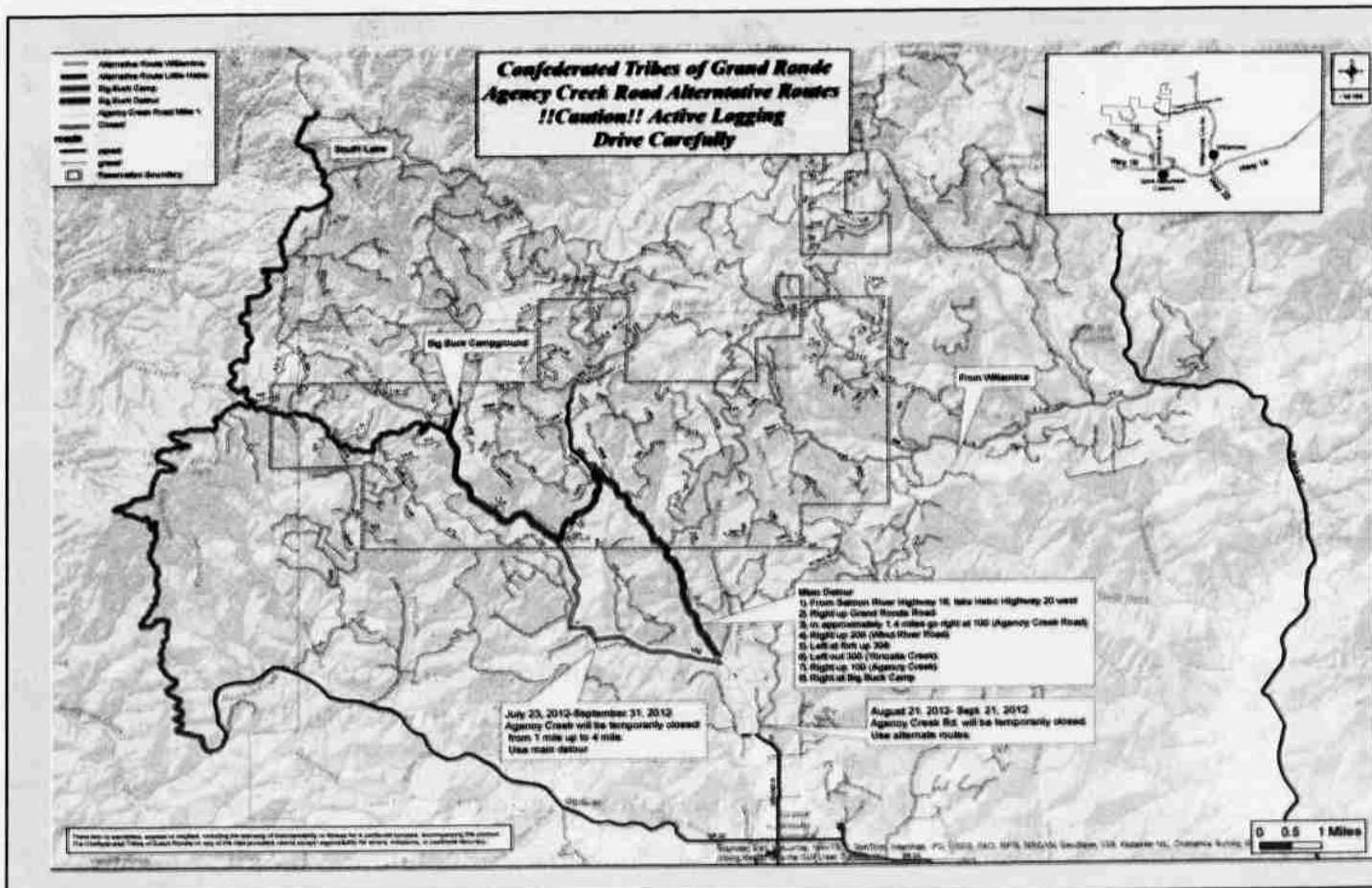
Oregon, with 1,300 electric cars, is leading the nation in its build out of the Electric Highway.

The West Coast Electric Highway promises a corridor by 2020 when some 2 million electric cars will be able to travel between Canada and Mexico without harmful emissions.

The public plan anticipates that more private partners, like AeroVironment, will move in quickly. Some will set up stand-alone charging stations, others will build what Horvat calls, "opportunistic charges," where customers may be going to a grocery store anyway, and while there they will plug in for a charge. Fred Meyer is already one of these, installing charging stations as new stores are constructed and as current stores are remodeled.

Even with gasoline engines, 80 percent of trips are less than 40 miles, Horvat said, often making charging unnecessary while out for daily errands. For these drivers, many new charging units are being built at residences offering the opportunity for overnight charges.

Another piece of a friendlier future for the environment is being built today, and, said McClary, "It truly is a win-win." ■



Agency Creek Road closure

Agency Creek Road, from the junction with Grand Ronde Road to the junction with Yoncalla Creek Road (milepost 4.0), is scheduled to be closed beginning Aug. 21 through Sept. 21, 2012. This road closure is necessary for road repairs, including re-paving, of Agency Creek Road. Alternative routes will be available (please see map on left). For more information, contact the Tribe's Project Engineer Jesse White at 503-879-2404. ■