

Road project will limit access to Reservation

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

A \$1.8 million project will limit access to the heart of the Grand Ronde Reservation on Agency Creek and Yoncalla Creek roads starting this week.

Starting on Monday, Sept. 14, Pacific Excavation of Eugene will close both roads at their intersection and access will not be permitted between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The roads will be open at all other times, said Pacific Excavation Project Manager Spencer Chamberlain.

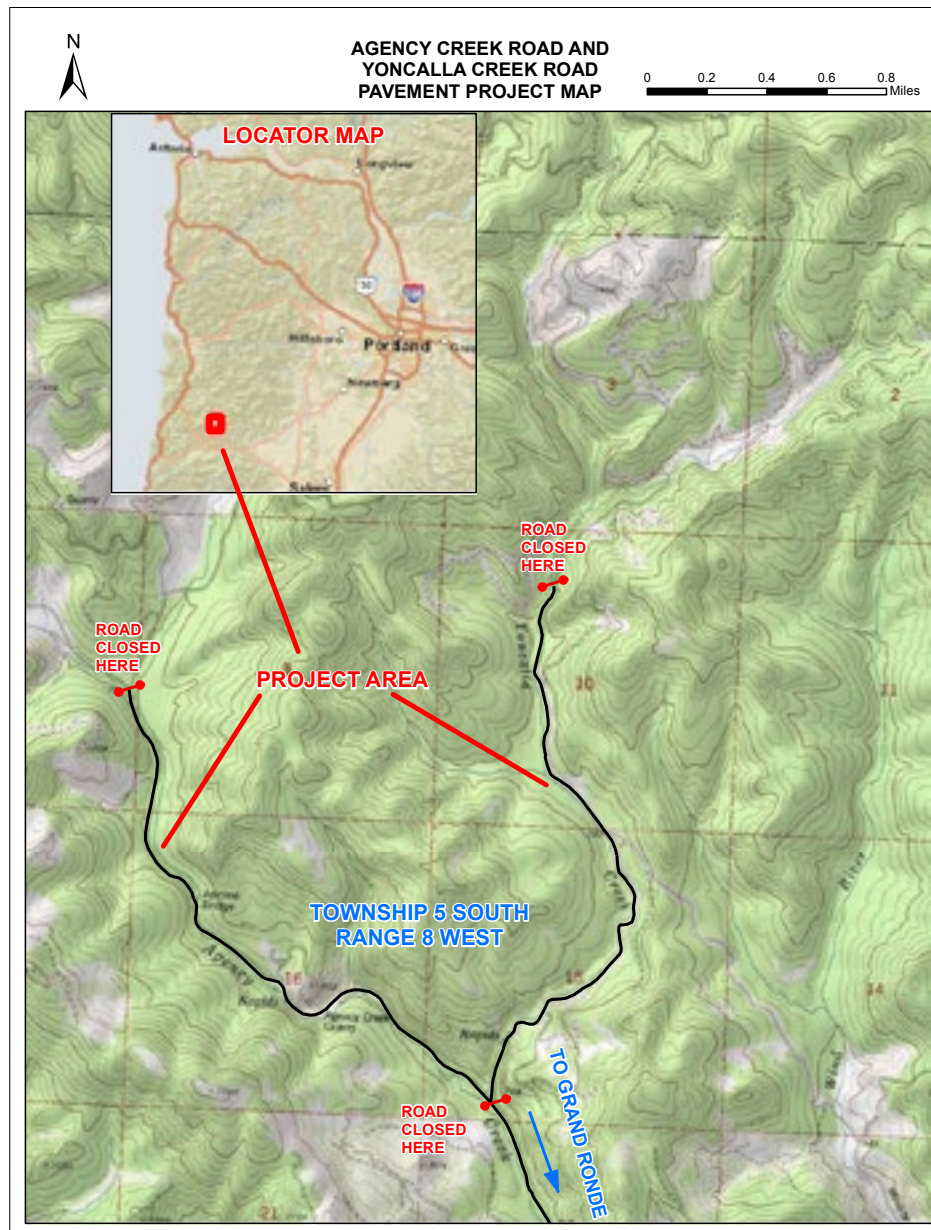
The project will include road rehabilitation, replacing culverts and asphalt repaving of two miles on both roads. Work will be conducted simultaneously on both roads.

"There will be holes dug, so there will be no chance for people to get by," Chamberlain said.

"These roads are 50 years old," said Tribal Public Works Coordinator John Mercier, "and they've gone through 50 years of hard labor ... truck traffic, recreational traffic. The pavement is cracked in some areas, potholed and we found areas of subgrade that are failing underneath the road. The roads are in need of reconstructive surgery and a facelift."

Pacific Excavation will have six to eight employees working on the project, including two Tribal members hired through the Tribal Employment Rights Office.

A flagger will be stationed at the



Map created Volker Mell

intersection of both roads to alert people that they cannot proceed north. Mercier said he is also rent-

ing a reader board to place at the intersection to alert people of the project's status.

Mercier said the new work will begin where a 2012 project that repaired and repaved four miles of

Agency Creek Road left off.

"As with any construction project, construction will disrupt the normal flow of traffic on the roads during construction, and we all must expect delays when traveling in the construction area," Mercier said.

The roads experience anywhere from 10 to 20 vehicles a day to 100 to 150 vehicles a day in the summer, he added. "During the summer you see a lot of people going up there," Mercier said.

"We are really excited about this project," said Assistant General Manager Dawn Doar. "It's going to help improve the roads and also provide unencumbered access once the roads are done so people don't have to worry about traveling on them."

Mercier thanked the Tribe's Natural Resources Department, Engineering/Public Works/Facilities and Maintenance Department, General Manager's Office, Tribal Attorney's Office, Finance Department, TERO, GIS and Tribal Historic Preservation Office for their assistance on the project.

Tribal Council approved the contract for the project at its Aug. 26 meeting.

Mercier said the work is funded by the Tribe's federal Tribal Transportation allocation.

Pacific Excavation has previously worked with the Tribe, winning the Ackerson Road Lift Station contract.

Chamberlain said road work is projected to last through the end of November, depending on weather. ■

Housing installs stop signs, changes speed limit

The Grand Ronde Housing Department has installed two new stop signs near the welcome center, as well as changed the speed limit in Tribal housing from 35 mph to 25 mph.

For more information, contact Homeownership Coordinator Vicki Jones at 503-879-1465. ■

Tribal Transportation Plan to be updated

Public Works Coordinator John Mercier said the Tribe's current Transportation Plan is going to be updated in the near future.

"The federal government actually requires us to draft complete, long-term transportation plans," Mercier said. "Ours was completed in 2007 and needs to be updated."

Mercier said Tribal members will start seeing notices in *Smoke Signals* seeking input in early 2016 regarding development of the new Transportation Plan.

"We've grown so much since 2007 that we are probably going to rewrite the whole thing," Mercier said. ■

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When: October 6th, 10:00 to noon & the following 7 Tuesdays (ending November 24th)

Where: Grand Ronde Adult Education Bldg., Room 126

Cost: FREE with child care** & meal provided*** for children 18 months - 8 years

prizes Parent Educator: Carmen Mercier

Register: Online: www.midvalleyparenting.org
 By phone: Heather 503-623-9664 ext. 2368 OR Audra 503-879-2069 OR Amanda 503-879-2039

Pendleton Drawing

Plan has teeth to it

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because it places the burden of implementing it on to the Tribes instead of the teachers in the classroom and because it has a built-in driver for supporting the plan when it is implemented.

"Plans are nice," said Riggs. "We've had them before. But the feeling is now that this really will be implemented. It has teeth. Written into the plan is a support mechanism, so that's the nice thing about it."

"Teachers are very valuable people and I think they serve an important purpose. Tribes are willing to play a big role in this. I believe folks will get in line once they re-

alize there is assistance there. We as Tribes hold a lot of responsibility for this plan. It's our charge to educate these people on our issues."

Riggs said the tangible positive in this effort is the importance of having Native students and the greater population at large realize that Indian people are still here.

"We are not bookmarks in history," said Riggs. "We are thriving, living people of culture. We are among you right now - in your classrooms. It is important that the state of Oregon and really the rest of the United States gets this awareness and gains this perspective that we are a living culture. We are a living history. We're not relegated to the past; we're among you." ■