

Three-day closure of U.S. Hwy. 730 begins Oct. 22

The Oregon Department of Transportation's contractor, Weaver Construction, is repairing two bridges along U.S. Highway 730 between the junction of Interstate 84 and the small town of Irrigon. The bridges are located in Morrow County near mile point 168.8, about a mile east of the I-84 junction.

To accommodate the construction of new concrete bridge decks the route will be closed to all traffic for three days starting at 5 a.m. on October 22 and ending around 2 p.m. on October 24. During the

closure through traffic will be detoured around U.S. 730 via Interstate 84 and Interstate 82. Motorists are advised to plan extra travel time for this detour route.

This is the second full closure of the route needed for repairing the UPRR Clarke and USRS Canal bridges. A similar closure took place in September.

Prior to and after the closure, motorists can expect minor delays at the work site with single lane travel and temporary signals controlling traffic movements.

"We understand the closure will affect some travelers and ask that motorists plan ahead," said ODOT Region 5 Public Information Officer Tom Strandberg. "We will open the route as soon as possible."

The bridge repair project is scheduled to be completed by November 15, 2008.

More information about this project is available by contacting ODOT Region 5 Public Information Officer Tom Strandberg at (541) 963-1330 or by email at thomas.m.strandberg@odot.state.or.us.

Stroeber retires as grooming chairman/operator for 4-Corners Snowmobile Club

Don Stroeber recently retired as the grooming chairman/grooming operator for the 4-Corners Snowmobile Club. Don had been the grooming chairman and volunteer operator for 15 years, and through those years Don had operated and maintained three different groomers.

Grooming snowmobile trails can be a lonely task, with grooming usually being done in the early hours of the morning when few other people are using the trails. Don spent many cold mornings in the cab of the groomer smoothing out the trails for snowmobile enthusiasts and their families to enjoy for the upcoming weekends throughout the winter. The groomers are owned by the Oregon State Snowmobile Association and allocated to clubs around the state. As a token of appreciation for his many years of volunteering, the 4-Corners Snowmobile Club members presented Don with a jacket and a card of appreciation this past summer.



Pictured in the top photo is Don with the groomer. Bottom Photo: Club President Cliff Dougherty presents Don with a jacket. —Contributed Photo

Valby Lutheran dedicates memorial grove

Valby Lutheran Church dedicated a memorial grove on Sunday, October 19, to commemorate infants who did not survive and to honor the grief of parents who often mourn such losses in silence.

Three hawthorne trees, three yellow locusts, four red dogwood and two junipers were planted in memory of the children known to current Valby members and countless untold losses dating back to 1886 when the church was founded.

It is the hope of Valby Lutheran that this new life on the Valby landscape will be a long-lasting source of beauty and comfort.

The community is welcome to come and take a look, and to join us for worship every Sunday at 9 a.m.



Top Photo: Workers file in procession to the site where the memorial grove is being planted. Bottom Photo: Volunteer workers from Valby Lutheran Church plant the trees for the memorial grove. —Contributed Photos

Volunteers needed at Boardman Grasslands Conservation Area

The Nature Conservancy invites anyone interested in maintaining Boardman Grasslands Conservation Area, located near the town of Ione, to participate in a volunteer work party on Saturday and Sunday, October 25 and 26.

Sandy flood-deposit and loamy lakebed soils at this new conservation area host excellent examples of native Columbia Basin bunchgrass communities with their associated wildlife, including long-billed curlews, burrowing owls and Washington ground squirrels, an endangered

species in Oregon.

The goals for the conservations area are to protect Columbia Basin sagebrush shrub-steppe and grasslands. During this work party, we will be planting native wildflowers in a grassland restoration area and cleaning up around a corral that was burned in a recent wildfire.

Participants should bring: sturdy hiking shoes, a long sleeved work shirt and pants, a daypack, rai- gear, a hat, sunscreen, sunglasses, a towel and any toiletries or personal items

you will need, one large or two water bottles (drinking water will be available at the Ione house, but not at the preserve), insect repellent and leather work gloves if you have them (if not, some will be available to borrow). Bring several layers of clothing. Be prepared for any type of Oregon weather. Please keep in mind that there is no shade at this preserve.

Registration is required. For more information or to register, contact Susan Hawes at 503-802-8100, extension 121 or shawes@tnc.org.

BEO Bancorp 3Q earnings increase 5.7%

BEO Bancorp, and its subsidiary, Bank of Eastern Oregon, continued with its steady and strong earnings result for 2008 with net income for 3Q2008 of \$610,000, compared to 3Q2007 earnings of \$577,000, an increase of 5.7%. YTD earnings were even more impressive with 2008 YTD net income of \$1,831,000, compared to 2007 YTD earnings of \$1,616,000, an improvement of 13.3% year over year.

"We are very pleased with these interim results being posted today," said E. George Koffler, President and CEO of the holding company. "Despite the significant financial headwinds we see nationally and regionally, our team of dedicated bankers continues to make good decisions that benefit us in the long run." "Our challenge, like many banks, is to maintain credit quality in these tumultuous times," said bank President and Chief Credit Officer, Jeff Bailey. "We have consistently improved our regular monitoring systems in the credit area and aggressively built up our loan loss provision."

The bank booked a \$500,000 recovery during the quarter from a charged-off loan relationship in 2005, while also adding \$300,000 to the reserve from earnings. This was balanced by write downs totaling \$268,000 on loans secured by real estate,

of which the bank expects to recover about \$115,000 in the fourth quarter. The net effect of these activities was an increase in the loan loss reserve balance from \$2,001,000 on June 30, 2008, to \$2,536,000 on September 30, 2008. Loan totals increased 33% year over year to \$176,101,000, and the loan loss reserve ratio to total loans now stands at 1.44%. "Strong profitability has allowed us to add appropriately to the reserve while sustaining continued growth," added Bailey.

Non-accrual loans grew from \$760,886 to \$1,726,303. A bulk sale is expected to pay off the real estate loans noted above during October and the remaining \$760,886 is a well-secured agricultural loan in a Chapter 12 bankruptcy. No loss is expected on this credit.

Non-performing assets increased from 0.46% to 1.02% as a result of the non accruals and the classification of a single construction and land development loan. That loan is well secured and is expected to be performing in the fourth quarter.

Deposit liability growth continued slow and steady, ending the quarter at \$178,293,000, a 4% improvement year over year. "Our branch operations staff continues to attract good quality, reasonable priced deposits," said Executive Vice President and Chief

Operating Officer, Gary Prophet. "We are also using a variety of strategies to help depositors keep their nest egg safe and sound, including FDIC insurance restructuring and our CDARS product that gives customers access to \$50,000,000 worth of FDIC coverage," added Prophet. Bank of Eastern Oregon opened a full-service branch in Enterprise, Oregon, on October 14, building on its very successful Loan Production Office in Wallowa County.

Liquidity issues that have caused a number of bank problems recently were aggressively addressed during the quarter according to Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, Mark Lemmon. "We implemented a multifaceted liquidity plan during the third quarter that assures our ability to meet cash requirements and lending needs of our customers. The plan has been rigorously tested and is sound," said Lemmon.

Total assets of the bank grew to \$222,605,000, a 12% increase year over year. Capital growth was also a bright spot with total equity at \$20,056,000, an improvement of 12% year over year. The bank continues to be well capitalized by FDIC standards.

For further information on the company or to access internet banking, please visit our website at <http://www.beobank.com>.

Walden discusses lake level at Heppner campaign swing

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He said the last water appropriation bill (where the study would be done) was completed four years over- due. He also said with the new administration coming in next year it would take some time before things settled down.

On another subject of public concern, Walden explained his position on voting in favor of the recent \$750 billion bail out bill. Jack Meligan of Heppner asked Walden why he voted in favor when the public was "300 to one against it."

"I don't put my finger to the wind and decide how I am going to vote," Walden said. He said he met with the Federal Re-

serve and Treasury officials and was convinced it was critical for the country and the economy. "I am a small businessman and I never asked for a bailout," said Walden.

He said he did not want to see eight percent unemployment and the freezing of the credit markets, and there was a possibility the US economy could decline by one third. He said they also made sure there were protections for the tax payer and not "golden parachutes" for CEOs. "It was the most controversial and difficult bill I have ever voted on," Walden told the crowd, "but I think it was absolutely necessary."

Free Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Plan Assistance Coming to Your Town

Morrow County Health District will be offering Free Medicare Part D consultation appointments during the month of December to help you determine the best prescription plan for your specific needs. Plans change each year so it's important to review your coverage each year!

Morrow County Health District Staff will be scheduling appointments to meet with local residents in the following towns:

- HEPPNER — DECEMBER 2ND, 9TH, 16TH & 29TH
- BOARDMAN — DECEMBER 11TH & 18TH
- IONE — DECEMBER 4TH & 15TH
- IRRIGON — DECEMBER 1ST & 8TH

Locations and a phone number for scheduling consultations will be announced soon.