

Umatilla celebrates new Wanapa Road, six years in the making

By JESSICA POLLARD
STAFF WRITER

On June 4, the city of Umatilla celebrated the opening of the new mile-long Wanapa Road with a ribbon cutting ceremony.

The road was funded by a \$3.5 million in lottery bond money in a legislative effort spearheaded by Rep. Greg Smith in 2013, and opens up access to 500 acres of industrial land to governmental entities.

"If you look at the government to government appropriation, the number of parties involved, and the challenging geology we had here, this still happened in a timely fashion," said Kim Puzey, general manager of the Port of Umatilla.

"When I was first elected to Umatilla City Council several years ago, the city was hard pressed to maintain existing city streets," Mayor Mary Dedrick told the crowd gathered at the entry of the road on Tuesday. Mayor Dedrick thanked the landholding entities for their collaboration.

The city of Umatilla will own and maintain the road, which heads east from Beach Access Road and ends at a 120-acre industrial land site owned by the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. The Port of Umatilla will now have access to 300 acres of land.

The Department of Corrections provided the land to construct Wanapa Road, and will gain access to 150 acres of land just east of Two Rivers Correctional Institution.

The industrial parcel could



Umatilla Mayor Mary Dedrick receives assistance at the ribbon ceremony on Wanapa Road.

Staff Photo by Jessica Pollard

be used for future growth of the prison, according to a recent press release. Two Rivers Correctional Institution is the largest employer in Umatilla, according to the city's website.

The land is eligible for enterprise zone benefits — tax credits for capital investments — and other benefits as well, according to Ryan DeGroff, economic planner with the CTUIR.

Duane Dyer worked on the water line along the road for the project and looks forward to the possibility of job growth in Umatilla thanks to the new industrial

land.

"It's all growing," he said.

Dyer says that one of the trickiest parts of constructing the road was blasting the thick layer of basalt beneath the few inches of topsoil on the land.

Holes were drilled every 18 inches along the road and explosives were used to excavate utility trenches for the project, according to DeGroff.

"It's really stable ground that's good for some industries, but it sure makes construction expensive and time-consuming," DeGroff said.

Many thanks were passed around during the ceremony, including to the CTUIR.

"I especially want to thank our tribal partners for my education into who each of you are and what your values are," Puzey said.

For Umatilla City Manager Dave Stockdale, Wanapa Road is more than two lanes stretching a mile.

"This road symbolizes the collaboration of Tribal, State, Port and City governments working together to enhance community and economic development," Stockdale said in a press release.

LETTERS

Thank you groundskeepers

To the editor:
Congratulations to the Hermiston High School groundskeepers! The campus looks absolutely beautiful. It makes me proud to see our community investment is so well cared for.
Thanks for your efforts on our behalf.

Mike Mehren
Hermiston

Thank you Washington

To the editor:
Instead of so much negative feelings about the "tax" law that we have been privileged to not have to pay in Washington, we should be saying thank you for the many years we did not have to pay sales tax. Think of what we have saved. It has never been a law that said we did not have to pay it. We were privileged for many years to be exempt.
Thank you Washington! Oregonians say thank you!

Marilyn Spears
Hermiston

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