

A way out of town during disasters

County looks at back roads near Astoria and Seaside as possible lifelines

By Kyle Spurr
EO Media Group

Seldom used back roads outside Astoria and Seaside could offer a lifeline in a Cascadia earthquake.

Clatsop County Public Works is exploring ways to create alternate and evacuation routes and have identified several possibilities, including some that are currently gated off on private timberland.

County staff are proposing upgrades to Pipeline Road that connects Astoria to the Svensen area, and the Lewis and Clark Mainline that runs outside Gearhart and Seaside.

Pipeline Road is an 11-mile county road, with only 2 miles that are maintained. Lewis and Clark Mainline is an old logging road that cuts along a ridge through the county.

The total cost to revamp all of the routes being looked at is more than \$40 million and would add 40 miles to the county road system.

"It's a long range type of a plan to go over a series of years, but it would really be an investment and provide some increased emergency and evacuation potential and better logistical support,"



DANNY MILLER/EO MEDIA GROUP

A car drives down Pipeline Road, a potential emergency evacuation route, in Astoria.

Public Works Director Michael Summers said.

Summers presented the idea to the Clatsop County Board of Commissioners last week. He knows cities in the county have their own transportation plans, but he hopes to work together with the various jurisdictions. The commissioners expressed their support, calling the proposal a good vision for the county.

"This is excellent, proactive thinking," Commissioner Sarah Nebeker said. "It may not meet everybody's needs, but I think it's a great start."

Funding plans

The county is planning a work session this fall to talk

about different funding strategies and options. Besides seeking grants, Summers said, the county could get creative and fund the work through a local gas tax or bond measure. Each strategy has positives and negatives, he said.

Another option is to focus on one project at a time. As an example, making Pipeline Road a viable route would cost about \$15 million.

The Public Works Department recently submitted a grant application to the state to study tsunami evacuation planning, which includes researching evacuation routes. If funded, the county would receive \$90,000 to complete the work.

In the county's budget, the road division set aside \$50,000 to begin a feasibility study for the alternate routes. The funds could pay for a consultant to help with studies and actively pursue grant funding.

As the county considers the alternate and evacuation routes, Summers said, some of the routes could have insurmountable constraints such as private property, wetlands and historical site concerns.

"There is a fair amount of public outreach that has to happen," he said.

No bypass

Restoring Pipeline Road and Lewis and Clark Mainline would connect traffic to

U.S. Highway 30 and U.S. Highway 101, while offering a way around the congestion on the highways.

The county's proposal also includes restoring the Fletcher Mainline outside Gearhart and three evacuation routes in Seaside that would connect to the Lewis and Clark Mainline.

Bill Johnston, a state transportation planner, said the Oregon Department of Transportation and city of Astoria agreed two years ago that a bypass could not be done in the foreseeable future. Instead, the state and the city put support behind upgrading existing rural roads as an alternate route, rather than a bypass.

A bypass is not part of the county's plans.

"We are not talking about a bypass," Summers said. "We are talking about other ways around town."

From the state's perspective, Highway 202 already provides an alternate route around Astoria.

"If the purpose of establishing an alternative route is primarily to provide an escape route in the event of a natural disaster, it may be a more practical option to focus on upgrading OR 202 rather than constructing a new route," Johnston wrote to the city of Astoria.

New alternative routes are not a simple matter, Johnston said, since there can be permitting issues and geological hazards that would make work difficult.

"It's a complicated issue," he said.

When considering the benefits of new alternate routes, some believe heavy semitruck traffic will be eliminated through downtown Astoria. However, Johnston points out that trucks will continue to travel through downtown to reach the Port of Astoria or the Astoria Bridge.

"Rural roads have too many sharp curves and steep grades," Johnston wrote.

Emergency responders do see alternate routes as a major benefit.

Knappa Fire Chief Paul Olheiser said his coverage area contains about six bridges that have to be crossed to serve the community. If the bridges crumble in a natural disaster, the fire department will rely on alternate routes such as Pipeline Road.

"I'm in mind to believe those bridges are going to fail (in an earthquake)," Olheiser said.

Between the Knappa and Svensen fire stations, road construction is blocking portions of U.S. Highway 30. For construction or heavy traffic, Olheiser said, other options help emergency responders. Often times, emergency crews are able to get around such delays, but sometimes they cannot.

"If the county can figure out a way to alleviate that, that would be good for everybody," Olheiser said.



R.J. MARX/SEASIDE SIGNAL

An attached garage, shown here the morning after the fire, was a total loss as was the vehicle parked inside it.

Fire severely damages Gearhart residence

Firefighters responded to a house fire at 939 Ocean Court in Gearhart on Thursday, Aug. 4, at about 8 p.m. When crews arrived on the scene the attached garage was fully engulfed in flames and the fire quickly went to a second alarm, according to Gearhart Fire Chief Bill Eddy.

The occupants of the house, an elderly male and

female, vacated the house safely and did not require medical attention. A neighbor, who was hosting a family gathering nearby, said his family witnessed the fire and his two brother-in-laws assisted in helping couple out of the house before fire crews arrived.

Eddy said the garage, where the fire originated, and

the vehicle inside it was a total loss. Because of concealed spaces in the design of the roof, the living quarters sustained significant smoke and ceiling damage. Firefighting crews were on the scene until just after midnight.

Assisting Gearhart firefighters were the Seaside, Warrenton, and Cannon Beach fire departments.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

MONDAY, Aug. 22
Seaside City Council, 7 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

THURSDAY, Sept. 1
Seaside Parks Advisory Committee, 7 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

TUESDAY, Sept. 6
Seaside Community Center Commission, 10 a.m., 1225 Avenue A.

Seaside Library Board, 4:30 p.m., 1131 Broadway.

Seaside Planning Commission, 7 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

WEDNESDAY, Sept. 7
Seaside Improvement Commission, 6:30 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

Gearhart City Council, 7 p.m., City Hall, 698 Pacific Way.

Golf tourney raises \$60,000 for Jason Goodding family

Also underway are plans to set up a Goodding Family Scholarship

By Ray Pitz
For EO Media Group

A recent golf tournament in the memory of slain Seaside Police Officer Jason Goodding raised more than \$60,000, money that will help the Goodding family, as well as establishing a scholarship fund and another fund to help other families that might suffer similar tragedies in the future.

The tournament, held July 22 at Quail Valley Golf Course in Banks, attracted 145 golfers, and likely just as many sponsors, according to Roger Schenk, a former Sherwood teacher and coach of Goodding's who was on a committee of 12 supporters who organized the tournament.

Schenk said he was amazed at the community support and the fact they raised so much money.

"It blew us away," said Schenk, who also serves as the informal president of the Bowmen Family Fund. "It was fantastic."

Goodding, who was 39 at the time of his death, grew up in Sherwood and attended Sherwood High School, where he played basketball, baseball and football. He was shot and killed in Seaside on Feb. 5 while trying to arrest a man who had a warrant out for his arrest.

Schenk said in addition to the golfers, who paid \$110 each to play in the tournament, local businesses donated to the fundraiser with a raffle and silent auction held on the same day to benefit the event. The raffle included golf packages, Gerber knives and sports memorabilia

items. A total of 19 items were up for bids in a silent auction, including: a vacation trip to Mazatlán, Mexico; Oregon football tickets; and three large coolers — two of which were Oregon State- and University of Oregon-themed — filled with alcohol products and other goodies.

Schenk said everything at the event surprised him, from the number of golfers who showed up to the large number of sponsors.

One of the items was a quilt made by Joan Hackworth, who is the wife of Goodding's former football coach, John Hackworth. She incorporated Jason's badge number, 604, along with the date of the officer's death or EOW (End of Watch) complete with a "thin blue line" — the universal symbol which pays tribute to officers lost in the line of duty — running through the middle of the state of Oregon.

"It was a silent auction item that the Seaside police chief had started to bid on," said Schenk. "Once we saw that, we just pulled it off the auction table and gave it to him."

Schenk said the chief was very close to Goodding and his family.

"We decided that would be the least we could do for him," he said.

Schenk, who coached Goodding in basketball during the teacher's 12 years at SHS, said he is still receiving checks from those who wish to donate to the fund.

"I just took four checks to the bank today," he said. "We were just shaking our heads at how fantastic the community has been."

Now, Schenk said the goal is to put all the money to good use. He said he is in the process of discussing with Goodding's widow, Amy, if there are any needs they can address for her

or her two young daughters, Joslyn and Jayden.

Also underway are plans to set up a Goodding Family Scholarship, which would be awarded next spring to a Sherwood High School college-bound senior who has an interest in being a first-responder or nurse. Goodding's wife Amy is a nurse, Schenk pointed out.

While the Sherwood School Board tabled a motion earlier this year to name the high school football field after Goodding, Schenk said he's been asked by the board to collect public input on the proposal from local residents and businesses through a survey.

Plans are to eventually meet up with a school board representative and the high school's new vice principal to come up with a creative solution to honor Goodding.

Schenk said Goodding might have been a little embarrassed to think a football field was named after him, however, he said, "really, it is for us."

Any naming of the field would not change the name of Sherwood's football stadium, which was named after Aaron J. Contreras who lost his life in 2003 while serving as a U.S. Marine helicopter pilot in Iraq.

Meanwhile, plans are to set aside some funds to help anyone in the community who might find themselves in a situation similar to Goodding's family.

"In the future ... if there's a family who has a similar need, we want to help out with that," said Schenk. "We want to make a foundation that can help the community out."

Finally, plans are to retire Goodding's football jersey, No. 85, during the Sept. 16 Bowman home game football matchup with Lakeridge High School.

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