

Check traffic at Trip-Check.com

By ODOT Staff

You're stuck in traffic, rain is pounding on the roof of your car and your favorite radio personality is warning of congestion ahead. Is there an accident? A lane closure or detour you didn't know about?

You crane your neck out the driver's-side window to see what is slowing your commute, and as the rain blurs your vision and drenches your face, you can wonder: "Why didn't I visit Trip-Check.com?"

Winter weather and unprecedented levels of highway construction, statewide, mean drivers should be prepared. The Oregon Department of Transportation's TripCheck web site provides motorists with a one-stop site for Oregon travel information.

TripCheck is more useful than ever for motorists as construction ramps up on Interstate 5, Interstate 84 and other major routes across the state, mostly due to ODOT's \$1.3 billion OTIA III State Bridge Delivery Program. The bridge program, part of the agency's 10-year, \$3 billion Oregon Transportation Investment Act, is repairing and replacing hundreds of aging bridges across the state. On I-5 alone, drivers will pass through more than 20 active work zones between Portland and Medford in 2007.

At TripCheck.com, visitors can access current construction updates, view the latest road conditions via road cameras, get winter travel updates, and find tips on how to travel by bus, rail or ride-share. Travelers can easily access information about construction zones and approximate delay times by simply passing their cursor over an icon on a map. Alternately, the 511 system, created by the federal government in 2000, delivers traffic and weather information directly to callers over the phone.

"It's a simple, easy-to-use system that focuses on timely information for Oregon travelers," said Galen McGill, ODOT's manager of intelligent transportation systems, who oversees TripCheck. "Because of more active construction, more people are checking TripCheck in the summer than

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Top; Vernonia Cares volunteers served meals at the Senior Center Friday and offered a warm stop for any and all during the recent storm. Below; one of the many services the Vernonia Rural Fire Department Volunteers provided, during the power outage, were medical generators.

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Bits & Bites

By Jacqueline Ramsay



er and finished together. The entire evening I only heard two or three split reeds. The last number – bands combined with the choral group – was perfect, the band director couldn't see the choral director yet the timing was great. Thank you for an enjoyable evening.

Many thanks to the Senior Center and cooking crew that jumped in and warmed our hands and feet as well as the cockles of our hearts and stomachs. Also, thanks to the Red Cross, Fire Dept. and whoever had free fire wood for those that could use it, also to the other businesses that opened up for flashlights, batteries and lamp oil.

Vernonia – though inconvenienced – is lucky. Beaverton, I hear, had snow on December 18, Portland had ice and fog. It's been quite a year when you think about it. But we did survive, what next year brings is only partly up to us but how we react is totally up to us. Smile and say "Gee, I wondered what was going to happen next."

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all of you near and far. Oh joy, I've seen the white swan twice in the past two weeks.

We now have added another date to remember to our "calendar of events" to mark the passing of our times. Start where you will: 1st always with me is December 7, 1941; 2nd – total freeze over of the Columbia River at the Dalles, then the Vanport flood, then the burning of the mill, the flood of '96, and now the power outage of December '06.

If you didn't bother (because of the cold) to attend the Christmas program at Vernonia High School (all grades), it is your loss. It was the best ever. The new band leader knows how to get music out of your kids. You parents should be proud. They started together, stayed together

See you next year?



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