

Farm Bureau urges motorists to drive carefully on rural roads

Summer marks harvest season for many of Oregon's 220 agriculture products, from blueberries and cherries, to tomatoes and sweet corn. It's a time when more Oregonians head out into the country to purchase fresh produce directly from the folks who grew it.

Though it's easy to be absorbed by the beauty of the bucolic countryside, Oregon Farm Bureau urges drivers to please take special care when traveling on rural roads this summer.

Because of deceptively sharp turns, exposed hazards like trees or fences, steep slopes, and pavement edge drop-offs, the potential dangers of driving in the country should not be underestimated.

Although there are fewer crashes in rural areas, they tend to be more severe than urban car accidents. Probably due to higher speeds, twice as many fatalities happen on

country roads than on city streets. According to the Oregon Department of Transportation, there were 10,338 crashes on rural road areas in 2005, with 303 fatal accidents. Comparatively, on urban roads, there were 34,540 total crashes in 2005 with only 141 fatal accidents.

Also, because it is harvest season, large farming equipment is more likely to be out on rural roads during the summer months. Most of these vehicles are designed to operate at speeds of no more than 25 mph and are required to display a Slow-Moving Vehicle sign – a triangular sign with a red reflectorized border and a fluorescent orange-red center. If you come upon a vehicle with an SMV sign, slow down immediately.

Consider this: ODOT reports that a car traveling 55 mph requires about 224 feet to stop on

dry pavement, assuming average reaction time and braking. A car traveling 55 mph can close a 300-foot gap (the length of a football field) and overtake a tractor moving at 15 mph in about 5 seconds. If drivers do not begin to slow as soon as they see a farm vehicle, they might not have time to avoid a collision.

Oregon Farm Bureau offers a few simple safety tips for sharing the road safely with slow-moving farming equipment:

- When you see the triangular, red and orange slow-moving vehicle sign, slow down immediately.
- Be patient. A farmer understands that your trip is being delayed; he or she will pull off of the road at the first available location to allow you to pass.
- If you must pass a farm vehicle, do not assume the driver knows you are there. Pass with

caution.

- Don't assume when a farm vehicle pulls to the right, it is making a right-hand turn or letting you pass. Some large pieces of equipment must execute wide left-hand turns. If you are unsure, check the operator's hand signals and look at the left side of the road for gates, driveways, or any place a farm vehicle might turn into.
- Triangular SMV signs are for slow-moving vehicles only, not stationary objects like driveways, mail boxes, or fences. Instead use reflective tape or another type of reflective sign.

To help educate the public on the proper use of SMV signs and how to share the roads with farming equipment, Oregon Farm Bureau has created a Rural Road Safety brochure. To request free copies, contact Anne Marie Moss, OFB Communications Director, at 503-399-1701, ext. 313, or e-mail

annemarie@oregonfb.org. Or download the brochure at www.oregonfb.org.

Farm Bureau is a non-partisan, independent, nongovernmental, voluntary organization of farming and ranching families united for the purpose of finding positive solutions to the challenges facing the agriculture and natural resource communities.

Oregon Farm Bureau traces its roots to 1919 when the Umatilla County Farm Bureau was established in the heart of the state's wheat country. OFB was formally incorporated in 1932. In December 2007, the organization will celebrate its 75th anniversary.

Farm Bureau is organized in all 36 Oregon counties. Today, OFB has over 54,000 total member families, making it the largest general agricultural organization in the state.

Community Calendar

| JULY 2007 | | | | | | | AUGUST 2007 | | | | | | | SEPTEMBER 2007 | | | | | | |
|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
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| 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29 | 30 | 31 | | | | | 29 | 30 | 31 | | | | | 29 | 30 | | | | | |

| VERNONIA | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Alcoholics Anonymous | Mondays & Thursdays | 6:30 p.m., Head Start Bldg. |
| American Legion Post #119 | 2nd Thursday | 7:00 p.m., 627 Adams Avenue |
| Arts & Crafts Society | 2nd Thursday | 2:00 p.m., City Library |
| Booster Club | 2nd Wednesday | 7:00 p.m., VHS Library |
| Boy Scout Troop 201 | Tuesdays | 7:00 p.m., Scout Cabin |
| Boy Scout Troop 860 | Wednesdays | 7:00 p.m., LDS Church |
| Cemetery Beautification Comm. | 2nd Thursday | 6:30 p.m., City Hall |
| CERT | 4th Wednesday | For Info Call 503-429-3018 |
| Chamber of Commerce | 2nd Wednesday | For Info Call 503-429-6081 |
| Community Coalition | 2nd Monday | 12:30 p.m. School District Ofc. |
| Cub Scout Pack 201 | Scout Cabin | For Info Call 503-429-4250 |
| Friends of the Library | 1st Tuesday | 7:00 p.m., Vernonia Library |
| Girl Scouts, Neighborhood 4-2 | | For Info Call 503-819-0143 |
| Hands On Art Committee | 1st & 3rd Thursdays | 4:00 p.m., City Hall |
| Izaak Walton League | 3rd Thursday | For location call 503-429-7193 |
| Lions Club | 1st & 3rd Tuesdays | 6:30 p.m., Buckhorn Restaurant |
| Municipal Airport Committee | 4th Thursday | 7:00 p.m., City Hall |
| Narcotics Anonymous | Saturdays | 7:00 p.m., Head Start Bldg. |
| Pioneer Museum | | For Info Call 503-429-3713 |
| Public Works Committee | 4th Tuesday | 7:00 p.m., City Hall |
| Vernonia Cares Directors | | For Info call 503-429-1414 |
| Vernonia City Council | 1st & 3rd Mondays | 7:00 p.m., City Hall |
| Vernonia Community PTA | 3rd Thursday | 7:00 p.m., WGS Library |
| Vernonia Grange | 3rd Monday | 7:00 p.m., Grange Hall |
| Vernonia Health Center | 2nd Monday | 6:00 p.m., 510 Bridge St. |
| Vernonia Learning Center | 1st Wednesday | 7:00 p.m., VLC |
| Vernonia Parks Committee | 3rd Wednesday | 6:30 p.m., City Hall |
| Vernonia Planning Comm. | 1st & 3rd Thursdays | 7:00 p.m., City Hall |
| Vernonia Pride | 3rd Thursday | 1:00 p.m., City Hall |
| Vernonia Ridge Riders | Last Thursday | 7:00 p.m., Senior Center |
| Vernonia RFPD Board | 2nd Tuesday | 7:00 p.m., Fire Station |
| Vernonia School Board | 2nd Thursday | 6:00 p.m., District Office |
| Vernonia Sr. Center Board | 2nd Friday | 1:00 p.m., Senior Center |
| Vernonia Transfer Station | 2nd & 4th Saturdays, 8 a.m.-2 p.m. | Behind VHS |
| Vern. Volunteer Ambulance Assoc. | 1st Thursday | 7:00 p.m., Fire Station |
| Vernonia Volunteer Firefighters | 2nd Monday | 7:00 p.m., Fire Station |
| WOEC Directors | 3rd Tuesday | 7:00 p.m., WOEC |

| MIST-BIRKENFELD | | |
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| M-BRFPD Board Business Mtg. | 2nd Tuesday | 7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station |
| M-BRFPD Board Workshop | 4th Tuesday | 7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station |
| M-B Ambulance Drill | 1st & 2nd Thursdays | 7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station |
| M-B Fire Drill | 1st & 2nd Wednesdays | 7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station |
| M-B Helping Circle | 2nd Monday | 7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station |
| M-B SAR Drill | 3rd Wednesday | 7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station |
| M-B Volunteer Assoc. | 1st Tuesday | 7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station |
| Natal Grange | 2nd Wednesday | 7:30 p.m., Natal Grange Hall |
| T.O.P.S. | Mondays | 6:00 p.m., Main Fire Station |
| Upr Nehalem Watershed Council | For date call 429-2401 | 7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station |

| BANKS | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| Alcoholics Anonymous | Fridays | 7:30 p.m., Methodist Church |
| Alcoholics Anonymous | Wednesdays | 7:30 p.m., Methodist Church |
| American Legion Post #90 | 2nd Tuesdays | 7:30 p.m., Main Street Post |
| Banks City Council | 2nd Tuesday | 7:30 p.m., City Hall |
| Banks Fire District #13 | 2nd Wednesday | 7:00 p.m., Station 13 |
| Banks Library Commission | 3rd Tuesday | 7:00 p.m., City Library |
| Banks Planning Commission | Last Tuesday | 7:00 p.m., City Hall |
| Banks School Board | 2nd Monday | 7:30 p.m., Jr. High Library |
| Banks Youth Group | Sundays, Wednesdays | 7:00 p.m., UMC Youth Bldg. |
| Chamber of Commerce | 1st Thursday | 12:30 p.m., Fire District Office |
| CPO 14 | 3rd Monday | 7:00 p.m., City Library |
| Friends of the Library | 2nd Tuesday | 7:00 p.m., City Library |
| Lions Club | 1st & 3rd Mondays | 7:00 p.m., Brown Derby |
| Sunset Park Assoc. | 3rd Wednesday | 8:00 p.m., Gun Club |
| T.O.P.S. | Wednesdays | 7:00 p.m., Administration Bldg. |

| COLUMBIA COUNTY (All meet in St. Helens unless otherwise noted.) | | |
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| Board of Commissioners | Wednesdays | 10 a.m., Courthouse |
| Citizens for Senior Justice | 2nd Tuesday | 7:00 p.m., Sunset Park Church |
| Columbia Soil & Water District | 3rd Wednesday | 7:30 p.m., NRCS, 2514 Sykes |
| County Fair Board | 2nd Monday | 7:00 p.m., Fairgrounds 4-H Bldg. |
| County Parks Commission | 3rd Monday | 6:00 p.m., 1054 Oregon St. |
| Mental Health Advisory Comm. | 3rd Tuesday | 10 a.m., 2nd Floor, Courthouse |
| Comm. on Children & Families | 3rd Thursday | 5:30 p.m. OSU Ext., 550 N. Hwy. 30 |
| Local Alcohol & Drug Plann. Comm. | 2nd Tuesday | 3:00 p.m., 2nd Floor, Courthouse |

Organizations and meeting dates not listed may be included by calling 429-9410 or by mail to The INDEPENDENT, 725 Bridge Street, Vernonia, OR 97064.