

ODOT bridge project benefits Mitchell economy

■ Work crews provide economic boost to local businesses

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Central Oregonian

Aside from improving our roadways by repairing or replacing aging bridges across the state, the Oregon Department of Transportation's Bridge Delivery Program has also been shown to provide economic benefits to small communities.

While working on the US 26 Rush Creek-Antone Bridge Project just outside of Mitchell through October,

workers supported businesses by keeping their money local, according to a recent ODOT case study.

"Our downtown businesses did very well," said Mitchell Mayor Nancy Fitzgerald. "They're looking forward to construction of the next bridge."

During their time in town, crew members ate at the Little Pine Café, stayed at the town's motel and RV park, and shopped at local stores whenever possible. Some community members were also hired as flaggers for the project.

According to ODOT Spokesperson Alison Klaes,

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the project replaced two bridges and worked on a pavement preservation project. It began in April 2007 and cost a total of \$10.7 million from the Oregon Transportation Investment Act.

"Besides improving infrastructure, one of the main goals of the bridge program is to create economic opportunities throughout Oregon," Klaes said. "The program is committed to using local contractors, subcontractors and suppliers whenever possible."

Along with the benefits provided to Mitchell, Klaes mentioned that other com-

munities in the region have seen similar impacts. Contractors spent \$103,000 on miscellaneous goods and services in Vale, \$194,000 in Juntura, \$120,000 in Burns and \$10,000 in Riley.

Upcoming projects in central and eastern Oregon include the McKay-Silvies Slough project, a \$44.5 million project on the US 395 corridor between Burns and Pendleton, and the \$1.8 million Dixie Creek project, which runs from John Day west to Spray.

Klaes added that the Bridge Delivery Program is slated to repair or replace 365 bridges across the state over a 10-year period. Currently, 107 bridges are under construction and another 92 are completed and open to traffic.

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