



Oregon Public Broadcasting

Officials Break Ground On New I-5 Bridge Over Willamette River

BY RACHAEL MCDONALD

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Crews in Eugene and Springfield are working on the largest bridge project in the Oregon Department of Transportation's history.

It's a replacement for the Interstate 5 Bridge over the Willamette River.

Senator Ron Wyden and Congressman Peter Defazio were on hand to for the groundbreaking Tuesday. KLCC's Rachael McDonald reports.

The original bridge, built in 1962, has been closed for 4 years because of structural deficiencies. Since then, I-5 traffic has been crossing the Willamette on a temporary bridge.

Senator Wyden says this and other projects are improving transportation and helping the economy.

Ron Wyden: "The fact is there is no better economic multiplier for Oregon than investing in transportation. You put folks to work. And how 'bout a nice Oregon shout out for the great work being done by those hard-hats over there."

ODOT got input from community members including the Kalapuya Tribe on the bridge design.

The new southbound bridge will open to traffic in spring of 2011. The northbound span opens in December 2012.