

# The News-Review

Roseburg, Oregon

Vol. 140. No. 285

THURSDAY, MARCH 20, 2008

www.newsreview.info



JON AUSTRIA/News-Review photos

Elkton kindergarten teacher Yvonne Compton helps students Sadie Olson, right, and Bailey Holcomb present their class' contribution Wednesday to a time capsule being encased in concrete and placed under the southwest pylon of the new Elkton Bridge. Compton's class is contributing an M&M counting book and a book written by the students. Larry Gescher of Slayden Construction, which is building the bridge, watches the presentation.

## Bridge design has student touch

*New pylons designed by Elkton High School students; time capsule to be included*

**TERESA WILLIAMS**  
The News-Review

**E**LKTON — Beginning next fall, Elkton students will see their work carved in concrete built to last 75 years.

Elkton High School students have designed decorative pylons for the bridge being built at the entrance to town.



**Sanchez**

They are the first students in the state of Oregon to be involved in a public bridge design, said Lois Cohen of Zetlin Strategic Communications.

The company has been working with the Oregon Department of Transportation to get the community involved. Cohen said it's possible the project is the first of its kind in the country.

Younger Elkton students are invested, too. In the southwest corner, a time capsule filled with objects from each class from preschool to 12th grade will memorialize life in 2008.

Slayden Construction is building the bridge, and last spring company representative Larry Gescher promised \$500 to the student who worked hardest on the project.

That student was junior Richard Sanchez. He did most of the drawings for the pylons.



Slayden Construction's Larry Gescher seals the time capsule.

"It turned out pretty good because everyone helped out in my class," he said.

"It seemed like he was really able to take the ideas that he was hearing and turned them into the drawings that you see," teacher Debbie Williams said.

Sanchez said the most difficult part of the process was coming up with ideas.

The students interviewed community members to find out what best symbolized Elkton's past, present and future.

They came up with four animals — elk, salmon, osprey and monarch butterflies — which will adorn the tops of the pylons, Williams said. The bases will be made to look like Douglas fir trunks, with grapevines growing around them.

The trees, Williams said, represent the forested area and the support the logging industry has given to the community. The grapevine represents agriculture in general and the emerging wine industry in particular.

Originally Gescher thought the wood shop students would build forms to make the pylons, but the design was too complex. Instead, Roseburg company Victory Builders will carve the concrete, Gescher said.

At an assembly Wednesday, Elkton students explained what they were putting in the time capsule. They filled a wooden box with poems, CDs, pictures, notes, a whoopee cushion and more — symbols of each class' unique character.

After all the items were put inside, Gescher drilled the box shut. He'll keep it until the pylons are installed.

Anthony Calcagno, who works for the bridge design company T.Y. Lin International, surprised Williams with a \$500 check for the school's art department.

He said the idea of doing something special for the bridge came up early, and Cohen ran with the idea.

Calcagno said having high school students involved would never have occurred to typical design builders, but everyone involved went out of their way.

"I'm amazed it turned out so well," he said.

"We're thrilled," Cohen said. "The whole team is thrilled. Everybody on the team has derived so much satisfaction from this project."

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