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# The Dalles Chronicle

## Here comes summer



**J**ust a couple of weeks ago, we were wearing sweaters to work. Now, we're staring summer in the face, with the traditional Memorial Day kickoff sneaking up on us next weekend.

For many of us, that means time on the road.

Before we get too far along with plans, it's a good time to sound a note of caution.

Summer is also the busiest road construction season, and Oregon is gearing up for its largest season in years.

Here's what Matt Garrett, Oregon Department of Transportation had to say this week:

"This Memorial Day marks the kickoff of one of the busiest construction seasons in Oregon's history. Work on the Oregon Department of Transportation's state bridge program has shifted into high gear, with 63 bridges currently under construction and another 55 entering construction later this year. Already, 56 highway bridges have been completed and opened to traffic since the bridge program started in 2003.

"Across the state, you'll see ODOT workers and Oregon contractors working hard to repair, replace and modernize vital highway corridors and bridges. Travelers on Interstate 5 alone will pass through 19 active work zones between Portland and Medford.

"I can't overstate how important this work is for Oregonians. Our highway system is the lifeline that keeps our state moving forward. Our economic competitiveness depends on our ability to move people, goods and services more efficiently in our growing economy. Our commitment to motorists is 'Better roads ahead,' and I'm happy to say we're seeing the truth in that statement every day.

"No travelers, especially people on vacation, want to be slowed down on the way to their destination. That's why we've taken steps, wherever possible, to schedule work at night or during off-peak hours. We've also coordinated projects so that truckers, commuters and visitors get where they are going as smoothly and safely as possible.

"Still, it's possible that you may face delays. To minimize that inconvenience, ODOT has two great resources for up-to-date information about construction and traffic wherever you're traveling in Oregon. Be prepared before you hit the road — visit [TripCheck.com](http://TripCheck.com) or call 511."

Oregon's highways are the state's most vital economic link, and make possible the leisure trips that many residents enjoy during the summer. So when you travel this summer, expect a few delays along the way, use caution in work zones and don't let construction blow your vacation cool.