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TripCheck first stop in making travel plans

If you're planning to drive out of the area this winter, the Oregon Department of Transportation has some important information for you.

There's a web site available, known as TripCheck, that gives you the latest construction and weather information as it impacts travel.

"This is particularly timely information after what happened to the Kim family," said an ODOT spokesman, referring to the young California family that was lost while traveling on the backroads between Glendale and Gold Beach two days after Thanksgiving.

ODOT is advising travelers that, particularly during harsh winter weather, they should visit TripCheck.com before leaving on their trip.

Winter weather and unprecedented levels of highway construction statewide mean drivers should be prepared. ODOT's TripCheck web site provides motorists with a one-stop site for Oregon travel information.

The spokesman said TripCheck is more useful than ever for motorists as construction ramps up on Interstate 5, Interstate 84, and other major routes across the state, mostly due to ODOT's \$1.3 billion OTIA III State Bridge Delivery Program.

The bridge program, part

of the agency's 10-year, \$3 billion Oregon Transportation Investment Act, is repairing and replacing hundreds of aging bridges across the state. On I-5 alone, drivers will pass through more than 20 active work zones between Portland and Medford in 2007.

At TripCheck.com, visitors can access current construction updates, view the latest road conditions via road cameras, get winter travel updates, and find tips on how to travel by bus, rail or ride-share.

Travelers can easily access information about construction zones and approximate delay times by simply passing their cursor over an icon on a map.

Alternately, the 511 system, created by the federal government in 2000, delivers traffic and weather information directly to callers over the phone. People just need to dial 511 and follow the automated steps for information on the desired route they plan to take.

"We're making resources for drivers available, whether it's information about bridge construction or winter driving conditions in the mountains. People will be better prepared for the conditions they encounter if they know what to expect," said Galen McGill, who oversees TripCheck for ODOT.