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ODOT's OTIA III Bridge Program Completes First Stage

Agency credits success to partners, collaboration

The Oregon Transportation Commission has recognized the successful completion of Stage 1 of the Oregon Department of Transportation's OTIA III State Bridge Delivery Program and acknowledged the efforts of many public- and private-sector partners. The approximately \$70 million of work in Stage 1 work completed in October replaced 19 bridges and repaired two, from Mount Hood in the north to Klamath Falls in the south and east to Burns. There are five stages in the 10-year, \$1.3 billion OTIA III bridge program improving nearly 300 Oregon bridges.

"Oregon's economic future depends on safe, reliable transportation, and bridges are critical assets in our ground transportation system," Governor Ted Kulongoski said. "I'm proud of ODOT's hard work to implement the bridge program, and I congratulate all the public agencies, private businesses and professional associations for their commitment to making it a success. I also want to stress that this is just the beginning. Oregon will see the project through to completion, creating thousands of jobs and making the shipment of goods and services more efficient and profitable for the people who do business here."

"The OTIA program is changing the way ODOT does business," said OTC Chairman Stuart Foster. "The agency is delivering the bridge program with Oregon contractors. We are lucky we have skilled professionals in this state who provide such a high quality of service. The bridge program is strengthening the contracting, professional and design communities. Oregon will come out of the OTIA program with a private sector that will continue to deliver projects

Stakeholders in the OTIA program include the American Automobile Association, American Council of Engineering Companies, Associated General Contractors of America, Association of Oregon Counties, Federal Highway Administration, League of Oregon Cities, Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Council, Oregon Forest Products Transportation Association and Oregon Trucking Associations.

"This progress occurred because of the excellent work of our stakeholders. Their contributions have been key to this success," said ODOT Director Matthew Garrett. "We thank our partners working with us to improve Oregon's transportation system and support its economy."

ODOT is maintaining mobility by staging construction. Completion of bridge projects on U.S. 97, U.S. 26 and U.S. 20 allows motorists to use these alternate routes while bridge construction takes place on Interstate 5 and Interstate 84.

The Mount Hood to Chemult project was the largest design-build project in ODOT history, replacing 10 bridges along a 200-mile stretch of Oregon 224, U.S. 26 and U.S. 97. ODOT completed the \$35 million project in just two and a half years. The project broke records when contractors installed the biggest precast, prestressed concrete beams ever used in Oregon. Seven single-span beams measuring nearly 184 feet long and weighing 179,000 pounds each were installed at the UPRR Chemult Bridge on U.S. 97 in July 2005.

The beams were manufactured by Morse Bros., an Oregon company based in Linn County. Due primarily to work on the bridge program, Morse Bros. has increased the number of employees at its Harrisburg plant from 80 to 180.

"The bridge program is having an immediate impact around here," said Loren Later, general manager of the Morse Bros. prestressed division.

In Klamath Falls, prime contractor Hamilton Construction hired local subcontractors and materials suppliers, including United Pipe, A1 Trucking and Harvest Ford. The economic boost to Klamath Falls should continue now that construction is complete. While U.S. 97 serves as a prime alternate route for I-5, the city will see increased traffic and increased spending at local gas stations, motels, hotels and restaurants.

Bridge construction on U.S. 20, the Central Oregon Highway, brought new jobs and economic investment to central and eastern Oregon. ODOT contractors on the bridge program and other ODOT projects boosted the local economy by just under \$3 million.

ODOT's commitment to recycling in Stage 1 saved time and money and protected valuable resources. In Madras, the agency recycled more than 720 tons of concrete and steel from one bridge. The program also recycled more than 10,000 tons of concrete aggregate and rebar.

The OTIA III State Bridge Delivery Program is part of the Oregon Department of Transportation's 10-year, \$3 billion Oregon Transportation Investment Act. OTIA funds will repair or replace hundreds of bridges, pave and maintain city and county roads, improve and expand interchanges, add new capacity to Oregon's highway system and remove freight bottlenecks statewide. About 17 family-wage jobs are sustained for every \$1 million spent on transportation construction in Oregon. Each year during the OTIA program, construction projects will sustain about 5,000 family-wage jobs.