



# ODOT construction boosts local economy

By ODOT STAFF  
FOR BURNS TIMES-HERALD

Bridge construction on the Central Oregon Highway (U.S. 20) this past year brought new jobs and economic investment to Central and Eastern Oregon. To date, ODOT contractors on the OTIA III State Bridge Delivery Program and other ODOT projects have boosted the local economy by just under \$3 million.

In Burns, ODOT's economic investment created new jobs and steady work at a local lumberyard, increased rentals for a local rental business and resulted in work for a local contractor. Repairing or replacing bridges along U.S. 20 also removed weight restrictions that were limiting truck mobility into and out of the region.

The new jobs, additional revenue and increased freight mobility are particularly important in the central and eastern parts of the state,

where economic recovery during the past few years has been steady but slow.

Parr Lumber in Burns is a good example of how construction on bridges helps local businesses. Parr Lumber worked with Hamilton Construction on a project for more than a year and "moved a lot of business over the counter," said Assistant Manager John Case.

ODOT encourages contractors to use local businesses, and Case said the project definitely increased the lumberyard's profits.

ACW Rentals, also in Burns, did about \$10,000 of business with Hamilton between February 2005 and August 2005, according to Matt Nonnenmacher, the store manager. Hamilton rented a compaction roller, multiple forklifts and other small pieces of equipment that are too bulky to move long distances.

The bridge construction

brought ACW unexpected revenue. Regular road construction, which is common in the summer, uses specialized equipment, most of which contractors own. But for bridge construction, contractors need a wider variety of equipment of the sort ACW can supply.

The Central Oregon Highway project included the repair or replacement of 16 highway bridges along U.S. 20, three of which were funded by the bridge program. The remaining 13 bridge projects, funded by the STIP, were completed earlier this year. Prime contractor Wildish used Bend-based Dice Construction as a subcontractor. Dice worked on five separate bridge projects worth a total of \$785,000.

"It was a pleasure to work with Wildish on the Central

Oregon Highway project," said Denis Dice, owner of Dice Construction. "We appreciated the work and look forward to future projects. I think that ODOT and its contractors are doing great work out here."

The bridge construction contracts helped Dice Construction increase revenue while providing steady employment in the Burns region. The repaired and new bridges also helped remove weight restrictions on routes to and from the company, restrictions which had been having a negative impact on his business.

"I think it was a very good move to build stronger bridges on those routes," Dice said. "We used to have to detour around some bridges, sometimes for miles. Now, we have more freedom and are cutting our fuel costs."