

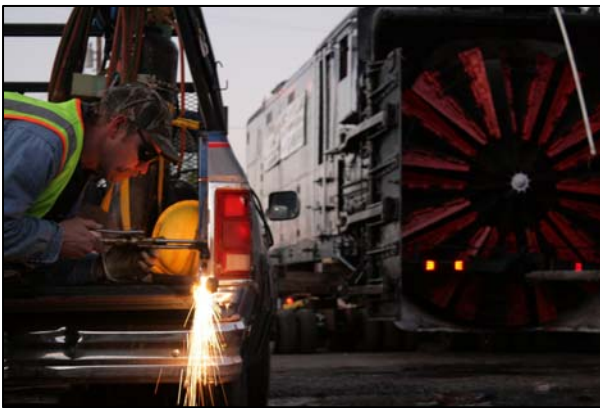
The Little Bridge That Could

With early morning temperatures hovering well below freezing, an ODOT bridge over the Williamson River in Chiloquin was put to the test.

It was time to send 120 tons of railroad locomotive snowplow to its final resting place at Train Mountain, near Chiloquin, and the only way to get there was over The Chiloquin Highway, also known as OR422. Along the path, the movers were to negotiate the Chiloquin Bridge in downtown Chiloquin...an old bridge that had to accommodate one of the bigger loads ever.

This was a big day for the little bridge that could. The old steel stringer bridge was built in 1934 and was never intended to hold something as large as this huge snow moving engine.

ODOT had issued a permit for the early morning hours on Sunday to disrupt the fewest travelers as possible.



So, even before the sun was up, local workers with Chris Arsenault Construction were putting the finishing touches on the equipment that would push and pull the big engine through Chiloquin and up and across US97.

Just as the sun was rising, the team moved out and for the first time in 6 years the big engine was moving...with the help of two tow-trucks out front and a tractor pushing from the rear.

At the bridge, though, the road train had to decouple, as the combination was simply too much to bear.

The trucks braced themselves at the west end of the bridge to



reel the engine across with the help of a giant steel line. Tugging ever so gently, the workers gingerly inched the engine across the bridge. With about a dozen workers heaving and hauling, and a large crowd on hand to watch, the old SP winter workhorse made it safely across the bridge.



Then it was up a spur road to the intersection with US97. At that intersection, the team revved up and hauled the engine across...marking one of the rare...perhaps the only time...that a railroad locomotive crossed US97 on tires...