

ODOT garners 'first place' for community support



As with past years, ODOT employees in the Union County area of eastern Oregon showed their community spirit by participating in the annual County Fair festivities this summer. Throughout the fair that ran the first four days in August, over 30 employees and family members took turns staffing the bright orange-colored ODOT booth, doling out project information and asking safety questions to kids who spun the safety wheel. A new activity for youths resulted in one lucky boy winning a very special prize.

Parade showcases ODOT equipment

A crowd-pleasing parade on August 2 kicked off the annual county-wide event. Nearly two dozen employees and family members walked, rode or drove the parade route through downtown La Grande. The ensemble was first in line behind the color guard and gave parade spectators an up-close view of some of Region 5's big or unique rigs, such as the bridge crew's 21-ton capacity crane, an antique road grader and some modified pick up trucks for manual placement of traffic cones.

"I think it's important that we are active in our community so people can know that ODOT is here to serve," said Twila Ivins, La Grande Equipment Shop office coordinator who helped organize ODOT's participation in the parade. "I like to see how excited the kids get when they see all that equipment coming down the road."



Parade watchers wave at Vince and Larry

At the head of the ODOT group, Dean Hamann of the La Grande Equipment Shop sat in one of the special jump seats built into the cone-truck's bed and carefully laid down a straight line of orange soldiers. Bringing up the rear was a second cone-truck where Cody Tennis of Meacham Maintenance neatly picked up the fluorescent markers.

In between, several employees' children were on hand to help pass out candy and paper fans, while Hailey and Lindsey Hulse (daughters of Lisa and Scott Hayes) waved to the crowd in the guise of Vince and Larry, the Crash Test Dummies.

Regarding the many ODOT employees, family members, friends and volunteers who took time to be part of this year's Union County Fair and Parade, Ivins said, "I think it's wonderful — it shows that they are dedicated and proud of what they do."

ODOT Fair Booth gets hundreds of visitors



Fair patrons enjoy the ODOT booth

Over the four-day event, hundreds of attendees stopped by the ODOT booth, which received a blue ribbon for first place organization. Children picked up small prizes for correctly answering transportation safety-related questions. Participating in Traffic Safety's scavenger hunt gave kids a chance to win a bigger prize. After completing the scavenger hunt questionnaire that had kids picking up clues throughout the fairgrounds, a drawing was held for a brand new bicycle.

Fourteen-year-old Brayden Halls was the lucky winner. Halls needed twice the luck to receive his prize as an incorrectly listed phone number had Traffic Safety Coordinator Patty McClure calling all over town in an attempt to track him down. After seeing an unfamiliar phone number on his caller ID, Halls called the main ODOT line and was soon connected to McClure, who gave him the good news.

"He got on the trolley with his uncle, came to ODOT to receive the new bike and helmet," McClure said. "He was pretty excited as he didn't have a bike of his own."