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\$43M I-84 Paving/Improvement Project planned to begin construction 2013

LA GRANDE, Ore. - The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) will begin construction in 2013 on the estimated \$43 million I-84 Kamela Interchange – 2nd St Undercrossing (La Grande) Project that will extend along the interstate between the Kamela Interchange at Exit 246 and the 2nd Street undercrossing in La Grande at mile post 260.2. The multi-year project will resurface the fast / inside lane with new asphalt and place concrete in the outside lanes of the freeway, replace functionally obsolete median barrier, repair bridges, construct rock fall corrections, add truck chain-up areas and build a westbound truck climbing lane along the Spring Creek grade.

To share information and hear comments on the project a public Open House Meeting will be held June 21, 6:30 -8 p.m., at the ODOT Region 5 Headquarters in La Grande, located at 3012 Island Avenue.

“The section of I-84 between Meacham and Ladd Canyon historically experiences premature pavement failure and early truck chain rut damage,” said ODOT Project Leader Ken Patterson regarding the resurfacing phase of the project. “As a result of this, the asphalt pavement surface in the slow lane along this section lasts approximately eight years instead of the 15 years normally predicted. By replacing the asphalt with concrete, we should be able to get 35 years or more of useful life of the road surface.”

ODOT is utilizing several funding sources to complete the project, including Jobs and Transportation Act (JTA) funds passed by the 2009 Oregon Legislature, Federal Interstate Maintenance funds, plus transportation safety and operations money.

The westbound truck climbing lane will be added between mile posts 246 and 248 to provide more room for vehicles to pass slow moving trucks as they ascend the steep 6 % Spring Creek grade. The existing slow lane and the new truck lane will be constructed with a concrete surface for durability. This phase of the project has been in the planning stages for years and will receive \$5.2 million in JTA Modernization funds.

“The 6% Spring Creek grade is an historical bottleneck on the freeway due to the slow speeds of commercial vehicles climbing the hill,” Patterson said. “During winter weather, frequent spin outs have

resulted in freeway closures that can take several hours to clear up. The new third travel lane will help alleviate some of these issues and keep traffic moving up and over the hill.”

Several new or extended truck chain-up areas will be constructed along the side of the interstate to provide more room for commercial vehicles to install and remove chains during winter weather events. A new, 10-foot wide chain-up area will be added along the eastbound freeway near mile post 253.5. Existing eastbound and westbound chain-up sites at mile post 249 will be extended to create more room for trucks. The project will also add illumination to several of these sites if funding allows. An existing chain up area near La Grande, at mile post 259.5 is being considered for added illumination. Public input on the potential illumination, especially near La Grande, is requested.

“Adding more chain-up areas along the snow zones of major state routes has been a key focus in Oregon over the past several years,” Patterson said. “They help reduce the number of trucks parked along the shoulders to install chains, which is a safety concern for all drivers.”

Additional components of the project include minor bridge repairs, plus adjustments to the rock cut near mile post 259 to help reduce the amount of debris falling onto the freeway. The rock fall work will widen an existing bench part-way up the wall and add a berm to help catch falling materials. The modifications will also provide more room for maintenance crews to access the site for routine debris removal.

Interested parties unable to attend the meeting can also contact Patterson by phone at (541) 963-1365, or by email at Kenneth.E.Patterson@odot.state.or.us .

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