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North East Area Commission on Transportation Meets March 31 and April 3 in La Grande

LA GRANDE, Ore. - The North East Area Commission on Transportation (NEACT) will host three meetings, one on March 31 and two on April 3 to discuss transportation related issues for eastern Oregon. All meetings will be held at the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) Region 5 Headquarters, located at 3012 Island Avenue, La Grande. Meeting dates, times and topics are listed below.

The NEACT, comprised of transportation stakeholders from Morrow, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa and Baker counties, and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, helps identify and prioritize transportation-related projects in the five-county area. An Area Commission on Transportation is an advisory body chartered by the Oregon Transportation Commission to help address all aspects of transportation in their given regions. The meeting location is accessible to persons with disabilities per the Americans with Disabilities Act. The general public is invited to attend. More information about ACTs is available at the ODOT Web Site at www.oregon.gov/ODOT/COMM/act_main.shtml.

March 31 Meeting: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. – Region 5 HQ, 3012 Island Avenue, La Grande

This special sub-committee meeting of the NEACT will review and prioritize applications requesting Connect Oregon II funding for transportation related projects in the Morrow, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa and Baker County area. In addition, the sub-committee will also review and prioritize a listing of potential future transportation projects compiled per requirements of Oregon Senate Bill 566. Their recommendations will then be presented at the April 3 meeting of NEACT for approval. More information about Connect Oregon and Senate Bill 566 is listed below.

April 3 Meeting: 9 a.m. to noon - Region 5 HQ, 3012 Island Avenue, La Grande

This is the formal, monthly meeting of the NEACT. Topics will include the following:

- ? ODOT and Transportation Commission Updates
- ? Byways Committee Update
- ? League of Oregon Cities and Association of Oregon Counties Updates
- ? Connect Oregon II Recommendations – Sub-Team review
- ? SB 566 Update – Sub-Team review
- ? Earmark Project Update
- ? Connect Oregon I Reserves Discussion

Time has been set aside for public comments during this meeting. To schedule time on the agenda at future NEACT meetings, please contact Glenis Harrison (541) 963-3179.

April 3 Meeting: 1 to 3 p.m. - Region 5 HQ, 3012 Island Avenue, La Grande

Following the formal NEACT meeting, members of the NEACT will meet with members of the South East Area Commission on Transportation (SEACT) to further prioritize project proposals for Connect Oregon II and SB 566. The SEACT represents Malheur, Grant and Harney counties, and the Burns-Paiute Tribe. The final prioritized listings will represent the eight-county eastern Oregon area known as ODOT Region 5.

At a later date, key members of the SEACT and NEACT will work with other Area Commissions on Transportation and related stakeholders to contribute to a statewide priority list for Connect Oregon II and SB 566 project proposals. That recommended list will be sent on to the Oregon Transportation Commission.

Connect Oregon II

Connect Oregon II will fund \$100 million in marine, rail, aviation and transit projects in the form of grants and loans. Project activities that are eligible for funding from the State Highway Trust Fund or that require or rely upon continuing subsidies from the Oregon Department of Transportation are not eligible for Connect Oregon II funding. For more information about Connect Oregon II visit the ODOT Web site at <http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/COMM/CO/COII.shtml> .

Senate Bill 566

SB566 directs the Oregon Transportation Commission to develop a list of potential future projects that would help reduce traffic congestion, improve freight mobility and/or enhance travel safety. Area commissions on transportation and other transportation stakeholder groups throughout Oregon, along with the Oregon Department of Transportation has been working with cities, counties and other municipalities to collect input for the development of this potential project listing.

For more information about these meetings or the agenda item topics, please contact Tom Strandberg at (541) 963-1330, or via email at thomas.m.strandberg@odot.state.or.us .

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