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Fremont Bridge Top Deck Closes for the Weekend

First of three weekend top deck closures begins at 11 p.m. Friday for reconstruction

The top deck of the Fremont Bridge will close at 11 p.m. Friday July 29 in the first of three weekend closures to reconstruct the southbound lanes.

The closures are necessary to safely replace the epoxy asphalt concrete layer on the upper deck -- the southbound lanes -- along a 2,159-foot-long section at the crown of the bridge.

"Most of our roads and bridges were built a generation ago," said Jason Tell, ODOT's Region 1 Manager.

"Projects like this are necessary to extend the life of the transportation system."

The bridge's lower deck -- the northbound lanes -- will remain open at all times during the upper deck work.

The closure schedule is subject to change depending on weather and other factors.

- Full closure of the southbound lanes from 11 p.m. Friday, July 29, to 5 a.m. Monday, Aug. 1. All ramps to the upper deck will be closed.
- Full closure of the southbound lanes from 11 p.m. Friday, Aug. 5, to 5 a.m. Monday, Aug. 8. All ramps to the upper deck will be closed.
- Full closure of the southbound lanes from 11 p.m. Friday, Aug. 19, to 5 a.m. Monday, Aug. 22. All ramps to the upper deck will be closed.

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The project, with a \$3.5 million budget, may require some weeknight lane closures as well but southbound traffic will remain open.

No construction work is scheduled on the bridge for the weekend of Aug. 12-14, making way for the annual Providence Bridge Pedal, which attracts 20,000 bicyclists and pedestrians every summer.

ODOT worked out the closure schedule in close consultation with Kerr Contractors and numerous partners, including trucking companies, the city of Portland, ambulance companies, the state of Washington, Oregon State Police, health care providers, the Portland Police Bureau and local fire departments.

ODOT will conduct increased patrols to quickly clear the roads of obstructions or stalled cars to ensure that a routine delay in normal times doesn't create a traffic jam.

Detour

Motorists southbound on I-5 and eastbound on Interstate 84 heading for U.S. 26, the Sunset Highway, should remain on I-5 south to I-405 and head north to U.S. 26. Those heading to U.S. 30 from I-5 can use the same detour via I-405 northbound. Drivers concerned about delays on I-5 may use Interstate 205.

Background

The epoxy asphalt concrete layer, which sits immediately under the asphalt road surface, has been in place for 38 years since the bridge opened in 1973. The top level asphalt surface is replaced periodically but the epoxy concrete layer underneath is now so rutted and worn that it needs replacing as well.

The contractor must grind off the asphalt surface and then remove the two-and-a-half inch epoxy asphalt layer all the way down to the steel deck. The complex, long-lasting characteristics of the epoxy asphalt concrete requires a curing period of several hours before it can handle traffic. Application requires warm and dry weather, which limits the project to July, August, or September. The Fremont Bridge is the only bridge in Oregon with this type of epoxy asphalt concrete pavement.

The final step in the process will be repaving the driving surface with one-and-a-half inches of conventional asphalt.

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