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For more information: Don Hamilton, (503) 704-7452 (c), [Don.B.Hamilton@odot.state.or.us](mailto:Don.B.Hamilton@odot.state.or.us)  
Kimberly Dinwiddie, (503) 539-8454 (c), [Kimberly.Dinwiddie@odot.state.or.us](mailto:Kimberly.Dinwiddie@odot.state.or.us)

## Half-mile Markers Installed on Two Highways

*More visible signs will improve emergency response and data collection*

Motorists on OR 217 and the Mount Hood Highway have been noticing new half-mile markers at the side of the road in the few last weeks.

As part of a pilot project, ODOT is installing new signs that aren't only larger but show the mileage in half mile increments. They're the first such half-mile markers in Oregon, although other states use half-mile markers, sometimes using markers every tenth of a mile.

The first and foremost reason is safety. Markers every half-mile help police, ambulances and other emergency services find people in need more quickly. When the only reference is a mile-long stretch of road, emergency vehicles can only guess at the best on-ramp and don't always guess correctly.

"This will help take the guess work out of emergency response," said Jason Tell, manager of ODOT's Region 1, the Portland area. "These additional markers will give emergency service providers more precise locations. The result should be quicker response times."

The new markers also give ODOT better tools for collecting highway statistics. Today, highway crash statistics are calculated only in one-mile increments. A statistical analysis every half mile will let ODOT to a better job of understanding specific conditions at a crash scene, such as a curve, an elevation or a line-of-site problem.



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The new signs have been installed on OR 217 from milepost 0.5 to 6.5, from U.S. 26 (Sunset Highway) to Interstate 5, or 26 signs in all. The signs on OR 217 will include the route number and the direction in addition to the mile marker.

On U.S. 26, 124 markers have been installed from milepost 27 to 57, roughly from Sandy to Government Camp. All are in place except for the stretch between mileposts 44.5 to 49 because the contractor handling the installation must complete another project before installing the signs.

Cost of the project is expected to be about \$38,000.

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