

Bridge Redecking project progresses

smoothly

With peak summer tourism behind us, the Port of Hood River Bridge redecking project moves into its fall construction schedule on September 15. Night time bridge closures will begin one hour earlier at 9:30 p.m. Sunday through Thursday.

Construction crews are slightly ahead of schedule, having completed six of the 18 total panels scheduled for deck replacement as of August 15.

Each span consists of 11 or 12 panels for a total of 201 panels. This month, Christie Constructors began successfully installing three panels per night when possible, which may accelerate the schedule.

"Construction is moving along well," relays project manager Ed Hoyle of HNTB Engineers. "We've run into minor things that have needed adjustment, but no major changes." He says some bridge patrons have been held up more than 20 minutes, though most delays are less than 10 minutes except during peak commuting times. The first crossings in the morning may experience slightly longer delays because the side with the most vehicles is allowed to cross first at 5:00 a.m.

Hoyle remarks the public has been very courteous, with a few exceptions. People unprepared with the bridge toll contribute to the most consequential delays, hindering traffic flow.

"We realize the great inconvenience it creates in this critical link between Oregon and Washington,"

Hoyle expresses. "We've heard from most people, 'Get it done as quickly as possible.'"

Approximately 30 people are employed with the project, some local workers in addition to key crew members from Christie Constructors, and union workers from other areas.

Christie Constructors is staging the 20' x 20' deck pieces, with rail posts and rail attached, at its construction site near the Port of Hood River Expo Center. The company loads its five flatbed trailers once a week with a week's supply of deck panels.

At 9:30 p.m., single lane closures allow crews to begin unbolting existing deck panels. When the bridge closes at 10:30 p.m. (9:30 p.m. beginning September 15), a crane moves onto the bridge, and by 11:30 p.m., the first panel is lifted out. The following hour, the new deck panel is placed. The process repeats for succeeding panels, and the new panels are then bolted into place and guardrails attached before the bridge opens to traffic each morning.

Many bridge patrons have detected a noticeable difference in the new open grid deck. The criss-cross grid design is significantly quieter and more stable than the old decking, which has been in place since 1952. Hoyle says the noise varies with vehicles, depending on their tire treads.

Frequently Asked Questions About Bridge Redecking

Why do I have to pay a toll sometimes, and don't have to sometimes?

The Port waived toll a few times when traffic backups were extraordinary. The only reason tolls have been waived is to expedite traffic flow.

Why are the new deck panels rusty?

They are made from "weathering" steel, or COR10, that will darken with age to an earthy brown, and will not require painting.

There have been some nights the bridge didn't close. If the closure schedule changes, how can I find out?

On a couple of nights this summer, bridge crews were unable to safely work on the bridge due to high winds. Crews generally won't know if this may occur until after scheduled closure times. Usually the crane is already positioned on the bridge, and crews wait for the wind to die off. The decision not to close the bridge generally would not be made until past midnight. There is no way for advanced notification if and when this occurs.

Why are the rub rails being removed and not replaced?

The Federal Highway Administration safety standards do not permit the old-style rub rails. Many drivers relied on the curb-like metal bumpers when crossing the narrow bridge. Bridge engineers are currently working on a delineating device similar to a fog line or rumble strip so motorists can be more aware of the edges. Not only do new guardrails have to meet all current design criteria, they also must be lightweight so as not to exceed the rated capacity of the bridge trusses. The driving surface on the new deck is 2 inches wider than the distance between the old rub rails.

Just the FAQs



Summer 2004

BRIDGE CLOSURE SCHEDULE

Single-Lane Closures

Monday-Thursday:
5:00 a.m. - 6:00 a.m.
7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
9:30 p.m. - 10:30 p.m.

Friday: 5:00 a.m. - 6:00 a.m.
7:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Allow for up to 20-minute delays during these times.

★ **FULL Night Closures** ★
Through September 14
Sunday - Thursday
10:30 p.m. - 5:00 a.m.

Beginning September 15
Sunday - Thursday
9:30 p.m. - 5:00 a.m.

Commuters during these hours must detour over Cascade Locks or The Dalles bridges.

Bridge users can subscribe to the Port of Hood River's email notification list for updates on bridge construction and closure schedules.

Please log on to the Port's web site portofhoodriver.com to subscribe.

Toll free Bridge Closure Info
877-BRIDGE-0
(877-274-3430)
or locally at 541-386-6832.

For further details, contact the Port of Hood River at 541-386-1645 or email porthr@portofhoodriver.com.

PORT OF HOOD RIVER

PO Box 239
Hood River, OR 97031

Columbia Gorge Community College opens Hood River site

Leveraging resources and utilizing technology to strengthen the community's workforce is a Port of Hood River objective nearing fruition with the opening of the Columbia Gorge Community College Hood River site.

The Hood River campus opens for Fall Term September 27 with a state-of-the-art technology center and basic skills training center. Two classrooms will offer both day and evening classes for up to 300 students daily.

Betz Construction of Hood River is the contractor of the \$290,000 remodeling project, customizing 5,000 square feet of space on the top floor of the Port's Big 7 Building at 616 Industrial Street in downtown Hood River.

The project has received over \$150,000 in building grants, including \$30,000 from the Oregon Investment Board to assist in development, \$89,000 from U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for building renovation, and \$33,000 from U.S. Forest Service for the renovation design work. The Port of Hood River contributed \$80,000 to the project, citing its significance to the local community and region.

"We have been working on finding space in Hood River for two years. The blending of existing space and dollars is a bonus for everyone in the Gorge," expresses Mike Schend, chairman of the Board of Education for CGCC. "This new facility will provide very needed day time space for college services and become the engine for economic recovery by training people for the workforce. The retraining opportunities for displaced workers is the key to keeping families working here at home."

The location will conveniently serve local students seeking two year associate

degrees, professional/technical courses, and/or the foundations to transfer to a four-year institution. The CGCC Basic Skills program offers reading, writing, mathematics and study skills, General Education Development (G.E.D.), and English as a Second Language (E.S.L.).

"The college will have state-of-the-art classrooms that do not exist anywhere in the Gorge," relays Port Commission President Sherry Bohn. "This was made possible by grant money received by the Port of Hood River." The Port acquired a \$200,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Education to purchase and install the latest in computer equipment and software.

Registration, admissions, general program information, limited financial aid information, and other enrollment information will be available at the Hood River Center via a full-time Student Services Secretary. Academic advising will be available in Hood River by appointment as well as college placement testing every term. For other information, this secretary will connect the student with the appropriate office at The Dalles campus.

Over 5,800 individuals are served by the college each year. Class schedules were mailed to Gorge residents in late July. For further information, contact Columbia Gorge Community College at 541-296-6182.

CGCC Hood River Center
Open House
Thurs., Sept. 23
from
5:00-7:00 p.m.
General Public Welcome



Sherry Bohn, Port Commission President, Dennis Whitehouse, Campus Services Director, and Mike Schend, Board of Education Chairman for CGCC, meet during remodeling at CGCC's new Hood River Center in the Big 7 Building.



Bridge Project SURVIVAL

Helpful tips for making traffic delays go more smoothly:

- Please be considerate and allow alternating merging from intersections to keep traffic flowing when backed up, even if you don't have a stop sign. The cooperation of motorists allowing I-84 traffic to merge toward the bridge is especially appreciated.
- Please have toll ready when arriving at the toll booth. Exact change is helpful to keep traffic moving.
- Use caution when passing flaggers. This is a dangerous job, especially on a high bridge. Don't let frustration from delays be taken out on flaggers, toll takers or construction workers.
- Do not enter the passing lane until approaching the flagger, to keep lanes clear for opposing traffic.
- Please do not block intersection.

According to Phil Chaney of Christie Constructors, numerous traffic violations have occurred with motorists failing to stop at flaggers signs. Violators are subject to \$484 fine for violations in the construction zone. The Port of Hood River is concerned about public and worker safety during the deck replacement project. The job of ensuring everyone's safety falls to the flaggers in the yellow and orange vests. You can help them by doing your part to reduce work zone accidents.

- **Slow way down.**
- **Pay attention to the advance warning signs.**
- **Avoid distractions such as talking on cell phones or dealing with young children in a back seat.**

Remember, while it may look like traffic is held up for no good reason, the flagger is aware of many work zone issues that may not be visible to you.

Thanks for helping the Port of Hood River safely improve the Hood River Interstate Bridge!



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Port Community Relations Committee spearheads numerous projects

The Port of Hood River relies on staff and elected officials for effective operations, but it also depends on the service of dozens of community volunteers on Port committees.

Budget, Waterfront Recreation, Airport, and Community Relations are a few active groups. Each committee includes Port staff and commissioners, as well as community members, who offer feedback, act as a sounding board, and send recommendations to the Port Commission.

A new Community Relations Committee formed a year ago and has kept particularly busy developing its new mission statement, goals and strategies, as well as recommending strategies and goals for the Port of Hood River's Strategic Plan. "We have a proactive membership this year," according to Hoby Streich, chairman of the committee. "We've had hours and hours of discussion on issues, and ways to positively interact with the public."

Community Relations Committee members include local citizens Chuck

Bugge, Kathy Watson, Paige Rouse. Hoby Streich and Sherry Bohn represent the Port Commission, while Mike Doke and Linda Hull serve as staff members. The public may notice three committee activities within the next month.

September Business After Hours

The Port of Hood River is sponsoring the September Hood River County Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours at the Hood River Expo Center atrium (west entrance). The event will be held on Thursday, September 2, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., and is open to the public.

This occasion marks the first time the Port has hosted a Chamber Business After Hours. Mike Doke, Port Marketing Director, is spearheading the effort with Port Executive Assistant Linda Hull and the help of other Port staff, commissioners and the Community Relations Committee.

"The Port wants to take the opportunity to recognize the many companies that keep Hood River County's economy moving forward. Many of these businesses got their start in or are currently located at Port-owned buildings," explains Doke. "These companies provide everything from education to machine shop work, Internet access to electronics assembly. It's not often we can host them in the same location."



Signs will soon appear at eight Port facilities.

Port Property Signs

Eight signs have been produced and will soon be installed to improve identification of Port properties throughout the district. The new signs have a uniform design and color scheme, with Port logo, property name, and year of institution.

"Our hope is to increase awareness about the development and activities of Port properties, both for residents and visitors," explains Hoby Streich. "The Port has a long, colorful history, but interestingly, most of our current interests have been developed in the last decade or so."

Signs have not been produced for all Port properties, however, more may be added at a later date.

Please Join us Thurs., Sept. 12th Business After Hours 5-7p.m. in the Hood River Expo Center Atrium

Fall Newspaper Campaign

Small newspaper ads will soon appear in the Hood River News to advertise Port tenants, employees or volunteers. The intent of the ads is to showcase businesses and aid the community's awareness of the economy and the Port's role in economic development.

"The tenants provide a lot of jobs to the area, and should be recognized," notes Doke. "There are a lot of good things happening in these businesses, and the Port is proud to support them."

The current projects are intended as strategies to help create a higher level of understanding of Port programs, how Port activities benefit the community, and allow two-way communication between Port staff and commissioners and the public.

There are numerous ways to communicate with Port officials, in person, via telephone, email or via the Port of Hood River web site.

Telephone: 541-386-1645
Email: portthr@portofhoodriver.com
Web: www.portofhoodriver.com

PORT DIRECTORY

Commissioners

Sherry Bohn Bill Lyons
Fred Duckwall Hoby Streich
Don Hosford

Staff

Dave HarlanExecutive Director
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Newsletter ProductionPageworks

Humanities Software a local employer nearly two decades

Humanities Software has been a Hood River fixture and Port tenant since the late 80s. The company was founded in 1986 by Jon and Karen Madian as a publisher of Kindergarten through Grade 12 language arts software.

Humanities Software's writing and reading titles have won many awards for distinction in software development. When the company was acquired by Renaissance Learning, Inc. of Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin in 1999, the organization and its production changed, but medium to high-wage jobs were retained locally.

Renaissance Learning has six U.S. locations plus subsidiaries in Australia, Canada, India, and the United Kingdom. Paula O'Gorman is the Vice President of Content Development for Renaissance Learning, and manages content development in Hood River, Oregon, Vancouver, Washington, Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin and New Dehli, India.

Renaissance Learning is a leading provider of research-based learning software, school improvement programs, teacher training, and consulting. Its software is adopted by over 60,000 schools, including many Hood River County schools. Widely known as the creator of *Accelerated Reader*, *STAR Reading*, and *STAR Early Literacy*, the company also produces *Fluent Reader*, and a new product, *English in a Flash*.

In addition to employing around 20 locally, the company also contracts with a number of illustrators, writers, engineers, and voice talents.

Low turnover has been a trademark of the company since the beginning. "We have a unique situation because of our location," explains Peggy Menasco, Development Support Supervisor. "The location attracts people from other areas. Some of our expertise is here because we are in Hood River."



Helping with Humanities Software's move to Wasco Business Park are Tina Dye, Administrative Assistant, Paula O'Gorman, Vice President of Content Development, Jeff Hawkins, Information Systems Supervisor, and Peggy Menasco, Development Support Supervisor (seated).



Humanities Software leases new space at Wasco Business Park

The Port of Hood River will soon begin construction on Wasco Business Park's first building, claiming its first tenant. Humanities Software, a division of Renaissance Learning, Inc., will move from the Columbia Building to make room for Da Kine Hawaii's expansion, and will benefit from new space customized to its needs.

The Port accepted Betz Construction's bid of \$1,790,000 for the 15,000 square foot building. Construction will proceed immediately with hopes of weatherproofing the building before winter closes in. Occupancy is scheduled for spring of 2005.

Humanities Software will lease approximately 6,000 square feet of the new building, while the remaining interior will be left temporarily unfinished until leases are signed.

Paula O'Gorman, who spearheaded the office space search for Humanities, says the company and its employees are pleased to remain in Hood River. Humanities Software's parent company, Renaissance Learning, of Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin, has six locations in the U.S., the nearest in Vancouver, Washington.

"When you have a parent company out-of-state, consolidation is generally a consideration in relocation," explains Port Executive Director Dave Harlan. With limited options, he says the Port of Hood River did everything in its power to keep the local company.

"It was touch and go whether it would pencil out for them," says Harlan. "There is quite a difference in rate between Hood River and Wisconsin. It was a tough task to build a new building on relatively expensive land, and stay under the cost threshold to prevent them from consolidating in Vancouver."

Harlan says part of the challenge for the Port and other public agencies is the high cost of building. Government agencies must pay prevailing wages, whereas private developers aren't required to do so. Also, private investors generally want to develop basic buildings, especially when working in a small market, and Humanities required some special needs.

The Hood River office specializes in content development for Renaissance Learning's products, which includes voice and audio. It also provides multimedia content and graphics for the company. These specialties necessitate

Humanities Software has a suitable sound booth.

The company looked at existing buildings in the community, many with acoustical concerns from wind, and interstate or train traffic. In fact, the company's existing space was less than ideal due in part to noise from the Full Sail Brewing Company bottling line and Da Kine's manufacturing.

"We weren't able to find a place in Hood River that met our needs without major remodeling and expense," explains O'Gorman. "We spent a lot of time looking at alternatives, and realized we either had to build or move. Employee retention was a big concern with moving. The most compelling alternative locations were The Dalles or Vancouver. The majority of our employees live here, and depending on where we moved, we would have lost some within a short time. The Port really made an effort to keep the company in Hood River."

According to Humanities' employee Peggy Menasco, who assisted in the search for office space, Humanities has been working with the Port since Da Kine expressed interest in their space two years ago. "It was an eye-opener when we started looking to see how few places there are in Hood River for medium-sized companies," Menasco discloses. "Employees are absolutely thrilled about the new location, not only staying in Hood River, but not having to pay for downtown parking anymore."

"Keeping a good company like Humanities Software in town fits well with the county's economic development plan," Harlan expresses. "That's why we take on a project like this. Here's a company that ships its products electronically, there's not a lot of truck impact or transportation issues."

Harlan says the availability of industrial land, the cost of land, and the cost of construction is still a big problem for Hood River County. "We were a little nervous. There were considerable complications for pulling this one off," Harlan declares. "Humanities is the kind of company this community wants and needs. There was also a strong desire on the employee side to stay here because they like living here."

"It was a tough task to build a new building on relatively expensive land, and stay under the cost threshold to prevent them from consolidating in Vancouver."

Port Committee Members (Minutes are included in general Port minutes)

Airport Committee:

Commissioners Fred Duckwall, Hoby Streich

Members: John Benton, Ed Drew, Dwayne Troxel, Felix Tomlinson, Richard Clarke, Anne Yannotti (FBO)

Budget Committee:

All Commissioners

Members: Mike Benedict, Tom Drach, Joe Sheirbon, Felix Tomlinson, Kathy Watson

Community Relations Committee:

Commissioners Sherry Bohn, Hoby Streich

Members: Chuck Bugge, Paige Rouse, Kathy Watson

Waterfront Recreation Committee

Commissioners Sherry Bohn, Hoby Streich

Members: Ann Frodel, Steve Gates, Richard Sassara, Lori Stirn, Michael Schock, Dennis Shypert

Waterfront Asset Management Technical Advisory Committee (Ad Hoc)

Members: Kathie Alley, Mike Benedict, Bill Fashing, Steve Gates, John Gerstenberger, Tom McCullough, Dick Nafsinger, Carl Perron, Scott Reynier, Chris Strader, Tom Stevenson, Ken Woodrich;
Alternates: Jon Davies, Richard Lee, Linda Maddox

PORT MEETINGS Regular Port Commission meetings are held on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month in the Expo Center Conference Room. The Port welcomes your questions, comments and suggestions.

Wasco Business Park
3 Acres Available
Will Build to Suit.
541-386-1645