



Oregon Department of Transportation

NEWS RELEASE

Region 4 Wasco, Sherman, Gilliam, Jefferson, Wheeler,
Deschutes, Crook, Klamath and Lake Counties

December 19, 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WSDOT reopens the Biggs Rapids-Sam Hill Bridge in time for the holidays

Construction completed on budget; bridge opens to traffic ahead of schedule

GOLDENDALE –The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is delivering the newly redecked Biggs Bridge in time for the holidays, making travel over the Columbia River on US 97 faster and easier. The US 97 Biggs Rapids-Sam Hill Bridge is reopening to all traffic on Wednesday, Dec. 24 at 4 p.m., two weeks ahead of the scheduled mid-January opening date. The bridge had been completely closed to traffic since early September, requiring drivers to make a 40-mile roundtrip detour.

This \$16 million deck replacement project was funded equally between Washington and Oregon. Originally scheduled to take place in 2010, the project was accelerated to 2007 due to the increased rate of deck deterioration. WSDOT shortened the duration of construction by fully closing the bridge during construction.

“Part of our commitment to keeping bridges safe is not only a thorough inspection system, but also performing the necessary preventative maintenance and repair work at the right time before corrosion becomes too extensive,” said WSDOT Transportation Secretary Paula Hammond. “Giving our contractor full access to the bridge around-the-clock shortened the schedule and reduced the inconvenience to drivers,” she said.

By replacing the bridge deck, the life of the Biggs Rapids-Sam Hill Bridge has been extended, possibly by another 25 years or more. It will provide commuters with a better driving surface and a wider bridge deck. In addition to these improvements, this project will allow more goods to be

shipped across the Columbia River by lifting previous weight restrictions for this heavily traveled commerce trucking route.

Construction crews will continue to work on the bridge at night, with single-lane closures and flagging for final construction activities.

For information regarding the US 97, Biggs Rapids-Sam Hill Bridge Deck Replacement project, please visit the project Web page at: <http://wsdot.wa.gov/projects/US97/BiggsBridge/>, or e-mail comments/questions to SwGorge@wsdot.wa.gov or contact the Columbia Gorge Area Engineering Office at: 1-866-279-0730.

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