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(Brad Wittler is the Traffic Control Coordinator for Public Works)
At $7M/year, we are only able to fund about 60% of the prescribed road maintenance in the Josephine County Transportation System Plan (TSP). The TSP reflects what would be the most cost-effective long-term maintenance level for Josephine County’s existing road and bridge infrastructure.

Also of note on the budget front – Public Works personnel have been able to fund the Public Works’ annual new revenues of approximately $7M. This money has historically been about $4M from the State Highway Fund (gas tax, license/registrations, etc.); about $2M from the federal forest (O&C) payments; and the last $1M from a variety of smaller pools including Federal Highway funds, interest on fund balances and permit/land development revenue.

The projected new revenues to Public Works should be about $2M; which is nearly a dollar-for-dollar offset of the potentially lost federal forest payments. While grateful for a status quo funding picture, I still hold out hope for an extension of some or all of the federal forest payments.

As a grader operator, Bill is usually involved with projects that involve the widening or straightening of a road. This generally means moving a lot of earth, a job he truly enjoys. Bill also derives great satisfaction in seeing the final transformation of a project, especially when he is involved with it from beginning to end.

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Employee Spotlight

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For her outstanding service to Josephine County, Debbie Horton (center) received her 15 year longevity award. From left to right, Rob Brandes, Public Works Director; Lorna Inman, Sr. Admin Supervisor; and Chuck DeJanvier, County Engineer.

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Safety

It’s important to be proactive and promote a good safety attitude toward laws, rules, and workplace housekeeping practices to protect employees from accidents. As the old adage says “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” Developing and maintaining good workplace safety programs are the foundation of keeping a workplace safe. It helps minimize hazards, prevent accidents, and create a safer, healthier workplace. Below are some of Public Works upcoming Safety Meeting topics. Also included in our Safety Program are CPR, First Aid training, Forklift training, Behavior Based Safety, Bloodbourne Pathogen training, Workplace Wellness, Hazard Communication, Winter Driving, Slips, Trips and Falls training.

Working for you!

Engineering

Public Works and the Land Development Advisory Committee

In October 2009, the Josephine County Board of Commissioners established a Citizen Advisory Committee known as the “Land Development Advisory Committee” (LDAC). For a period of two years, LDAC is charged with performing a comprehensive review of the County’s land development regulations, including road and access standards, as a means to help streamline and simplify land development processes. The LDAC consists of eleven voting members and one alternate; staff support is provided by the County’s Planning and Public Works departments. The Committee consists of members from the Planning Commission, Grants Pass Board of Realtors, the Homebuilders Association of Josephine County, certified citizen advisory committees, plus a planning consultant, a land use attorney, and citizens at large. Ultimately, the LDAC is responsible for reporting its findings and recommendations at a joint meeting of the Rural Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners. The Board may then develop written directives to County managers on issues to be addressed as it deems appropriate.

Starting in February 2010, the LDAC has met to examine various aspects of both the County’s Rural Land Development Code (RLDC - latest revision May 2005) and the Public Works Design and Construction Standards and Specifications (DCSS - latest revision April 2005). Four town hall meetings have also been held, one each in the north and south valleys, as well as in the cities of Cave Junction and Grants Pass.

With such a broad undertaking, the Committee recognized the need to form subcommittees to explore the details of the RLDC and DCSS more fully. Public Works management had the opportunity to meet several times with the Road Standards Subcommittee to discuss the benefits and liabilities of various proposed changes. Such topics included permitting private roads outside of Planned Unit Developments, the need for engineered preliminary designs, allowing durable versus paved surfaces for new roads, creating a parallel between fire code and County minimum standards, a decrease in cul-de-sac radius, and increasing the lot limit on restricted residential roads from 5 to 10 lots. These discussions also involved comparisons with processes used by other nearby Oregon counties, and the need for compliance with Oregon state statutes, County ordinances and policies, as well as other regulatory documents.

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Gas Savings Tips

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Operations

Operations has been busy this past quarter with the following projects, as well as wind storm cleanup in March and record breaking rainfall. Crews were also kept busy with the normal season activities of ditch cleaning and vegetation removal.

Public Works’ sand shed, located in the Fairgrounds, has been paved and gates were installed to protect people and their horses from accidental injury. Sanding material can be stored year round, saving the time of moving sand in and out for the season. Racks were built to store the sanders in the off-season which allows the mechanics to safely perform the required maintenance.

An equipment storage shed was recently constructed near the front corner of Public Works’ yard. The pole style structure, 28’ x 120’, will be used to keep specialized equipment protected from the elements which will extend the serviceability of the equipment by protecting the exposed hydraulic hoses and electrical wires.

Josephine County Public Works applied for, and was awarded an Oregon Department of Forestry Grant, for the resurfacing of county roads within National Forest Service lands. The 2011 Chipseal Program will focus on 11.5 road surface miles of Happy Camp Road, as well as, including prep work and line stripping. Throughout the summer season crews will focus on preparing other areas in the county for 2012.

Fleet

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