



Contact: Alex Paul, Linn County Communications Officer, 541-967-3825 or email: apaul@co.linn.or.us

Linn County, ODOT team up for road safety

Several steps taken to make Highway 226 and Richardson Gap area safer

SCIO — The Linn County Road Department and the Oregon Department of Transportation have teamed up to make several safety improvements on Richardson Gap Road near its intersection with Highway 226.

There have been several accidents in the area in recent years, even though there is a clear line of sight on Richardson Gap Road.

Recently, Robert Giles, Jarrett Clark and Billy Kelso of ODOT's Albany electrical crew, installed advance warning flashers on the south of the Richardson Gap intersection with Highway 226 — which already has an oversized STOP sign. Advanced warning flashers had previously been installed on the north side of Highway 226.

“Our goal as a crew is to continue making the roads safer for all users. We leverage technology to make the roads safer and more efficient,” Kelso said. “We also encourage people to pay at-



Billy Kelso, Robert Giles and Jarrett Clark of the Oregon Department of Transportation prepare and install a new solar-powered advanced warning flasher on Richardson Gap Road south of the Highway 226 intersection. The driver of the vehicle in the background rolled down her car's window and thanked them for their work.

QUOTABLE

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Commissioner Sherrie Sprenger

tention when they are driving, maybe drive like they are in a school zone.”

Linn County Roadmaster Wayne Mink said that intersections pose issues in any road system.

“In an intersection, a lot of vehicles move in different directions,” Mink said. “About 50% of all collisions and 20% of all fatal car accidents happen at intersections. Defensive driving skills help reduce those accidents.”

Mink said that ODOT has already implemented numerous safety efforts at the site:

- Installed oversized stop bars both Richardson Gap Road approaches.
- Replaced 36-inch stop signs with 48-inch stop signs on both approaches.
- Installed reflective strips on stop sign posts.
- Installed oversized “intersection ahead” signs on the Highway 226 approaches in advance of Richardson Gap Road.
- Removed guide signs on Highway 226 in advance of Richardson Gap Road.
- Relocated the Highway 226 weigh station

sign.

Mink said more projects are coming, including:

- Adding rumble strips on Richardson Gap Road leading to Highway 226.
- Installing road name plaques on the Highway 226 intersection ahead signs on both approaches.
- Replacing a weigh station sign.
- Relocating Highway 226 covered bridge signs.

Mink said drivers need to be extra cautious at any intersection and offered the following safe driving tips:

- Before proceeding through an intersection, make sure the area is clear. “Always approach intersections expecting other traffic and pedestrians,” Mink said.
- Concentrate when you are in an intersection. “Avoid any kind of distraction, such as loud music or cell phone conversations,” Mink said. “Attention should be directed to the drivers around you.”

- Look both ways to see where other vehicles are and what their intentions at the intersection may be. “Oncoming traffic may be moving faster than you think,” Mink said.
- Look ahead for traffic and wait until there is space for your vehicle on the other side of the intersection. “Remember to stop and never run a stop sign,” Mink said. “If asked, no one would say they would risk their life to save a few seconds, but unfortunately, they do.”

Linn County Commissioner Sherrie Sprenger lives in the Lacombe area and travels frequently on both Richardson Gap and Fish Hatchery Drive.

“I’m very happy to see added safety measures on Richardson Gap,” Linn County Commissioner Sherrie Sprenger said. “This is a great reminder that we all have to focus on our driving more than running late, our phones, or anything else that divides our attention. I appreciate ODOT’s quick response and Linn County Road Department’s efforts to do all they can to make our roads