

## **Oregon Transportation Commission Report – January 2007** **From Matt Garrett, Director, Oregon Department of Transportation**

The Oregon Transportation Commission met in Salem on January 24, and received several reports. I'd like to share with you some quick hits on what we discussed.

- Rail Division Administrator Kelly Taylor outlined western Oregon rail corridors and the existing freight and passenger rail business activities. This begins an important conversation and will likely become a prominent piece in future transportation discussions.
- The Northwest Area Commission, (Clatsop, Columbia, Tillamook and western Washington counties) made its biennial report. The Commission recognized the many contributions provided by outgoing NWACT Chair Lylla Gaebel, and the leadership, passion and dedication of the incoming chair Shirley Kalkhoven.
- The Oregon Freight Advisory Committee Chairman, Tom Zelenka delivered the advisory committee's annual report. Mr. Zelenka shared the importance of freight to Oregon's economy as well as the many issues, (current and future) the committee is working on. As you know, the department considers impact on freight mobility in project selection and staging and construction.
- The Commission received a report from the Oregon Transportation Investment Group (OTIG) on the feasibility of building and operating the Sunrise Corridor project and the I-205 widening project. The information presented concluded that the Sunrise project was not feasible at this time as a public-private partnership because the route is too short to save much travel time, and free routes are too close by. The report stated that the I-205 project would be feasible and could be paid for by tolling the I-205 corridor. The Commission received the report and stated its intent to not proceed further until the Commission and the department could analyze the information learned from this work.
- Sustainability Manager Damon Fordham and John Kauffman from the Oregon Department of Energy provided an informational briefing to the Commission on the impacts for ODOT operations and the transportation system of what some scientists believe is the peak of the world's oil production capability.
- Deputy Director Doug Tindall continued the broad tolling policy discussion with an explanation of the Washington State study on tolling policy.

Additionally, the Commission approved the Highway 22/Cascade Highway Interchange Area Management Plan; a re-designation of Oregon Route 69 (Beltline Highway, Lane County) to Oregon Route 569; two project increases in authorization (US 101: Lone Ranch Beach-Chetco River Bridge; and US 101: Manzanita-Wheeler pavement preservation); and two STIP amendments (change Oregon 126: Poterf Creek from modernization to preservation; and removing the I-5: Elkhead - Anlauf preservation project in Douglas County from the 2006-2009 STIP).

On January 25, the Commission met with members of the Metro Council in the second of a series workshops to discuss the update of Metro's Regional Transportation Plan. Discussion centered on the plan's vision, goals and performance measures or outcomes and how these relate to the Oregon Transportation Plan, Highway Plan etc....

The next Commission meeting will be in Salem on February 21.