

PME Update: Fall-Winter, 2010

The U.S. 20: Pioneer Mountain to Eddyville project is now in winter mode after having completed another productive construction season.

As of October, 2010, the project has:

- Completed 2.5 miles of paving and guardrail placement. About 3 miles of paving remain.
- Excavated, place and compacted 4.2 million cubic yards of earth. 150,000 cubic yards remain to be moved.
- Completed 100% of 7 bridges.
- Continued work on 3 bridges.
- Completed storm water and culvert work.
- Environmentally secured 100% of the project site for winter 2010/2011.

The accomplishment that most people recognize is the completion of the **final road alignment** on the east end of the project. Motorists have been driving on that portion of the new highway since late August 2010.

Bridge Bent Issue

As we reported last March, two bridge bents at two of our ten bridges have moved out-of-plumb. Those bents were at Eddy B Bridge and Cougar Creek Bridge.

The development caused a hold on further work at four bridge locations which had landslide mitigation constructed as part of the bridge construction. The hold continues to date.

Monitoring equipment has been placed on and in the vicinity of those two bridges as well as Eddy C Bridge and Crystal Creek Bridge.

No other structure has recorded any movement and there has been no further movement of the bents at Eddy B and Cougar Creek Bridges.

There has been movement detected in the ground around the bridges but it is unclear if this is the result of normal, anticipated settlement of fill material or related to other causes.

Owner/Contractor relationship in a Design Build project

This is a Design-Build project and therefore it is the contractor's responsibility to inform ODOT as to why the bents moved. So far, we have not received a definitive explanation of cause.

Under the terms of the contract, it's the contractor's responsibility to deliver a suitably engineered solution and a suitably designed construction approach to solve the problem. Per the contract, the contractor is responsible for costs associated with the additional engineering and construction in response to the ground movement in these four locations.

We, the owner of the project, and the contractor, Yaquina River Constructors, disagree about the clarity and understanding of the information describing what factors have led to the bent movement. At this time, there is also disagreement over who is responsible for paying to fix the problem.

The contractor asserts that the bent issues are the result of site conditions that were not anticipated and that because of the unanticipated site conditions it is the owner's financial responsibility.

The two parties continue to discuss the issue.

How long will the delay last?

ODOT has not received a definitive explanation from the contractor of the cause and status of the problem, and it is unclear how the contractor will proceed. In the meantime, the parties continue to monitor for additional movement.

Over time, if no further movement is detected, or if there is a trend of movement that may explain the dynamics at play, the contractor should be able to develop a reasonable solution.

If a solution is forthcoming by the end of this winter it, is possible that the contractor will resume construction next spring with completion still possible in 2011. That would keep the project on schedule.

If a solution is not reached by the end of this winter, monitoring may need to continue through part or all of the next construction season which would put the project on track for later completion.

At this point ODOT has not been given enough information to say for certain when construction will resume.

Our obligation

As the project owner, it is our goal to deliver to the people of Oregon a safe and efficient route between the valley and the coast; a route that will endure the challenges presented by weather, geology and use.

The highway and the bridges being built will carry people and commerce into the next century. This route will be a critical lifeline in case of coastal emergency.

While we have faced difficult challenges, and this project has taken more time and money to complete than originally planned, ODOT has always acted and will continue to act in the best interests of the taxpayers.