



Hi, water

(Top) Thursday's flooding closed Highway 101 and rerouted traffic over Wilson River Loop in Tillamook - causing traffic delays of more than 40 minutes. (Right) The Miami Foley Road is closed to all but local and emergency traffic after a section of the road washed out at milepost 7.5.



Highway 101 was closed from Makinster Road to First Street before 1 p.m. on Thursday, due to high water. "If 101 is closed and [Wilson River Loop] is closed, we've severed the county in half," Liane Welch, Tillamook County Road and Public Works director said. Work to raise Wilson River Loop should begin by 2018.

Wilson River Loop to be raised following flood

By Jordan Wolfe
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It flooded. "We had white caps on Thursday," Liane Welch, Tillamook County Road and Public Works Director, said about sections of Wilson River Loop. The flooding event, which saw road closures beginning around noon in Tillamook, rerouted traffic from Highway 101 to Wilson River Loop north-south.

"We flagged for seven or eight hours, it took forever for the water to recede," Welch said. "I must have seen everybody in Tillamook on that road."

Traffic was backed up in some cases to Highway 6, with many people reportedly taking upward of 45 minutes to get through Wilson River Loop - which was down to one lane and flagger controlled.

Welch wants to begin raising the road by 2018.

"It was initially raised after the '96 flood," she said.

However, after the flooding events of 2015, Welch was able to proceed with plans to raise the three viaducts - land bridges along the loop - to prevent situations like Thursday's from happening.

"If (Hwy) 101 is closed and this road (Wilson River Loop) is closed, we've severed the county in half," she said.

Flood

Continued from Page A1

A hydrologic outlook will be necessary to ensure DeNoble's produce farm property and surrounding neighbors will not be impacted negatively, according to Welch. The cost of the project is expected to be anywhere from \$15 million to \$2 million, she added, but an intergovernmental agreement will lead to the Federal Highway Administration to pay 90 percent of the cost with a 10 percent local match.

"It will come right out of

our road department fund," Welch said. "These matches on projects wreak havoc on our ability to do ditching, paving and culvert repairs."

The road department will spend upward of \$200,000 to raise the viaducts, but at the cost of sacrificing other projects that may need to be done.

For Thursday's flooding alone, Welch said she expects a \$3,000 bill - but ODOT has already agreed to pay half, due to Highway 101 traffic being detoured along Wilson River Loop.

Miami Foley Road
It flooded in North County too.

Miami Foley Road at milepost 7.5 is now restricted to local access and emergency traffic only, according to Welch.

"If you're just travelling, use 101," she said.

On Thursday, the heavy rain caused a section of the road to wash out at milepost 7.5, almost to the center line, she added.

Two stop signs mark the section of the Miami Foley

where it is now restricted to one lane. Welch said heavy hauls are not allowed to pass this section of road due to the threat of it failing completely.

The road department will have a temporary fix within two weeks, according to Welch, and are already planning to replace the failing culvert with a fish passage structure that meets Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife guidelines.

Tillamook to Oceanside transmission line project: Landowner's perspective

By Brian Cameron
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The ongoing saga continues regarding the Tillamook to Oceanside Transmission Line project spearheaded by the Tillamook People's Utility District. The current plan for the transmission line will have it feeding off of the Wilson River substa-

tion which would require a good deal of power line construction through areas that are prime business property or valuable farm and pasture land to local dairy farmers.

Stuck in proverbial limbo for a number of years now, the project has had to go back to the drawing board numerous times to find a cost effective solution

to provide uninterrupted continuous power to the Netarts, Oceanside and Cape Meares communities.

Land and business owners in the impacted area are rife with opinions and things to say regarding the contentious project and from their perspective the

See FLOOD, Page A7

See TOTL, Page A9

TOTL

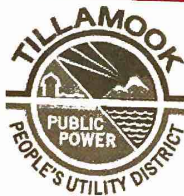
Continued from Page A1

reasons are abundant and plenty. Earlier this year a number of local farmers west of Highway 101 met to discuss the recent developments of the project.

Included in the names, it turns into a "who's who" of the local dairy families that have been established in Tillamook for generations: Rocha, Aufdermauer, Beeler, Peterson, Mast and Mizee to name a few.

Kurt Mizee of Tilla-Bay Farms, Inc. has been following the project closely. "It seems PUD has taken the liberty of deciding that it is simpler to go through high value property, rather than through already public property," he said.

Mizee also feels that there is still time to study more about the overall necessity of spanning the line over his and other's property, "knowing the usage has decreased on the Wilson River Substation gives us time to evaluate the chapter," said Mizee.



"Instead we should look at the potential previous route and work through the process of securing it through that project area."

It has been suggested by a number of impacted landowners and business people to reexamine the previous option of utilizing the Southern Flow Corridor (SFC), which would have the transmission line extend through the Eckloff Road area in the Stimson owned tree farm area near Hwy 131.

"Originally it was going to go from the Port of Tillamook Bay and into our tree farm off Eckloff road, it was originally purchased from Willamette Industries, surveyed and we assumed it was going to be installed in that direction," said Jon Wehage, the Coast Unit

Manager of Stimson Lumber. "But after the location of the substation changed to Wilson it threw quite the wrench in the works and has been tied up ever since."

According to Wehage, there are two issues to consider as far as Stimson is concerned - what is the best route and does the community need it?

"I don't think the PUD is making a very good case for capacity here," said Wehage. "But to me it seems this is more about building infrastructure for future concerns."

According to representatives at the new Roby's Furniture store on Highway 101 just north of downtown Tillamook, they feel that through the transmission lines may appear unsightly they simply shrugged and said ultimately it wasn't their decision to make.

But not everyone is completely against the project and almost everyone has expressed the understanding there is a necessity for an additional power route out that direction.

Tim Carpenter, Netarts-Oceanside Fire District Chief, sat on the origi-

nal planning committee that worked with PUD to determine a probable route for the transmission lines.

After numerous explored options which involved everything from running the lines subterranean, utilizing the existing transmission line, alternate routes using the SFC and field trips to potential impacted areas, it was determined the current route is likely the best and most cost effective for the district.

"No one was too happy no matter where they wanted to run it," Carpenter said. "But the route that they're currently going with was figured to be the best possible one available."

Carpenter continued to say PUD does deserve some

credit - as installing a new transmission line, no matter where or when, is always going to be a process where someone's toes are stepped on.

"I give them due credit, they had a lot of choices, nearly a hundred it seemed," Carpenter said. "But after going over all the possible routes this really was the one that seemed to work the best for reasons of construction, feasibility and capacity later down the road."

Though from the perspective of being located out in Netarts, Carpenter also mentioned he didn't believe this was necessarily about providing a more stable source of power as its primary benefit, but more

as a way to preemptively increase infrastructure and overall power storage to the entire grid and the added security of a second transmission line for consistent power would be a secondary or tertiary benefit in the long run.

"After the big storm of 2008, the PUD came and cleared a number of trees out of the way of the existing transmission line and since then we haven't had too many individual weather-related outages," Carpenter said. "But just recently our power was knocked out by an unfortunate seagull, so it's clear to me at least that a single transmission line does have its inherent weaknesses."