

Ceremony Celebrates Lava Land Improvements

by Bend Weekly News Sources

On Friday, May 26, a ribbon-cutting ceremony was held to celebrate improvements made to the summit road and parking area atop Newberry National Volcanic Monument's Lava Butte.

Forest Service officials, project engineers and contractors attended the event along with the public.

Improvements included widening the road using red cinder native to Central Oregon. Red cinder roads are a historic feature of the region and are visible on Bend's Pilot Butte and along the Cascade Lakes National Scenic Byway.

The parking area at the summit was also redesigned to develop a more pleasant pedestrian experience, according to Robin Gyorgyfalvy, a Deschutes National Forest landscape architect. "The experience up there was never meant to emphasize the use of cars," she said.

Gyorgyfalvy said wider handicapped-accessible walkways, a new picnic area and restrictions on large buses at the summit will also encourage pedestrian use.

Lava Butte includes an active fire lookout that is staffed in the summer and open to the public. The site is part of the Lava Lands Visitor Center, which is the interpretive hub for the Newberry National Volcanic Monument. Congress established the monument in November 1990 to preserve the area's unique geological formations and directed the Forest Service to administer the site.

Hours of operation at Newberry National Volcanic Monument administrative sites such as the visitor center, Newberry Caldera Welcome Station and Lava River Cave are everyday 9 am to 5 pm, except Monday and Tuesday.

Lava River Cave remains closed until further notice because of ice on the trail and steps leading to the cave entrance. The surrounding cave grounds and restrooms are open to the public during routine operating hours.

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