

## Highway 26/Mt. Hood safety corridor sees increased traffic enforcement

by Bend\_Weekly\_News\_Sources

An interagency traffic safety patrol Sunday kicked off extra enforcement directed by Oregon State Police (OSP) troopers and deputies with the Clackamas County Sheriff's Office (CCSO) using overtime grant funds in the U.S. Highway 26 Mt. Hood Safety Corridor, one of six safety corridors around the State selected by the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) to help law enforcement agencies pay overtime for dedicated traffic enforcement in these areas. "There are currently 13 state highway safety corridors in Oregon," said Anne Holder, ODOT Safety Division Statewide Roadway Safety Program Manager. "Safety corridors are segments of state highways with a fatal and serious injury crash rate at or above 110 percent of the statewide average for the same roadway classification." Increased traffic enforcement on the Hwy26/Mt. Hood safety corridor is designed to reduce the number of accidents in the area, such as this quadruple fatality accident near milepost 64 — OSP photo

OSP received grant funding to work 298 overtime hours during 2007 in the US Highway 26 Safety Corridor. In November 1996, ODOT designated the approximately 32-mile stretch of highway as a safety corridor. In December 2006, ODOT, working in cooperation with State Representative Patti Smith and the Highway 26 Safety Corridor Citizens Advisory Committee, extended the current Safety Corridor an additional nine miles. The new portion extends east to milepost 66.5 where new signs will be posted following the winter season. This added section of highway is where two fatal crashes happened last year including one that took the life of four people and led to the arrest of a driver on manslaughter charges. "This section of highway continues to be challenging and potentially dangerous because of constantly changing adverse weather conditions, the high number of travelers going to or through the area, and limited law enforcement presence," said Lieutenant Richard Evans, OSP Portland Area Commander. On Sunday, March 4, eight OSP troopers and five CCSO deputies teamed together to conduct a joint traffic safety enhanced patrol in the US Highway 26 Traffic Safety Corridor east from Sandy to Skyline Road which is near milepost 62. An OSP trooper with a drug detection canine assisted during the five-hour operation. Troopers and deputies issued a total of 131 citations, 58 warnings, and arrested one driver for driving with a suspended license, a misdemeanor offense. Of the 131 citations, 100 were for speed violations and one for careless driving. The top speed cited was for a driver traveling 89 miles per hour (mph) in a 45-mph speed zone. A few incidents of note during the saturation included: — At approximately 1 p.m., an OSP Senior Trooper stopped a vehicle driven by a Louisiana man for traveling 74 in a 55 near milepost 35 and issued a citation for violation of the basic rule. About 15 minutes later, the same man was stopped by a CCSO Deputy for traveling 71 in a 55 near milepost 27 and received a second citation for the same offense. — A blue Toyota Celica was checked at a speed of 74 in a 55. The Toyota eluded OSP and CCSO officers down McCabe Road. Driver and vehicle information was broadcast for a future stop of vehicle. — The OSP trooper with his drug dog was involved in three vehicle searches, one of which resulted in locating a small amount of marijuana. Traffic Safety Corridors are designated through a cooperative effort of concerned local citizens, legislators, state and local police, local public works agencies, emergency medical service representatives, stakeholders and ODOT representatives. Signs are placed on both ends of these safety corridors to inform travelers that they are entering these areas where traffic fines double where posted with double fine signs. "Slow down, pay extra attention, and stay focused on the driving task at hand while driving on any highway," Holder said.

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