

# County may cut bid phase to hasten Bilyeu repair

BY KEN O'TOOLE  
Headlight-Herald Staff

TILLAMOOK — The county Public Works Department estimates that filling of the sinkhole and repair of Bilyeu Avenue in Netarts, just off SR 131, may be completed within the next two months.

During extensive rainfall and flooding early the week of Jan. 9, a drainage culvert about 200 feet south of the SR 131 intersection failed, causing a large sinkhole in the road. Public Works Director Aaron Suko estimated that repair of the road and culvert could cost approximately \$100,000.

He said survey work is being conducted to determine the scope of repair work required.

“Due to competing workload requirements from the recent storms,” Suko said, the county road crew will not be able to conduct the needed repairs with its own manpower and assets in a timely manner.”

There is a possibility the county could save a little time if it could just select a contractor for the job and not have to put the project through the bidding process.

Commissioners decided Monday that at their meeting this Wednesday morning they will consider an order declaring a public contract emergency for an exemption for the Bilyeu



COURTESY PHOTO/Tillamook County Department of Public Works

County Road Department staff examine the Bilyeu Avenue sinkhole in Netarts.

Avenue repair.

It was decided Monday that there are enough reasons to justify this action. As summarized by Management Analyst Paul Levesque, these include potential environmental damage from the siltation and runoff from the sinkhole site, the area

of damage appears to be spreading, and the RV park at the foot of the avenue is affected by traffic having to detour to reach it.

It was believed earlier that state contracting laws would require the county to go through a competitive bid

process requiring notice of at least three contractors to bid the project work.

Still, several factors may affect the starting date of repair work and duration of the work. Suko said those include:

- Completion of on-site survey work to develop contract

details for the repair.

- Acquisition of temporary construction easements with the adjacent property owners in order to work on site of the culvert outlet.

- If the survey work calls for a project area significantly larger than the original fill space, the Department of Community Development and state Department of Fish and Wildlife may need to review the proposal further.

- Original fill material on Bilyeu may have been “the appropriate or best material,” Suko said. “That is contributing to continued ground movement. With conditions under the roadway not clear, repair work may encounter unforeseen conditions. Hopefully not.”

Suko said that while the Bilyeu project is important, “because there are alternative routes around the project site to nearby homes, the work is not treated as an emergency.”

As he put it, “The project is being treated with due priority, considering other Road Department requirements elsewhere.”

Another significant repair job ahead, Suko said, involves work on part of the guard rail and deteriorating shoulder on Tillamook River Road, which may turn out to be “almost as expensive “as the Bilyeu proj-

ect.”

Work will also need to be done on the Bay Ocean Spit road, which has been affected by rough surf, he said.

Another thing to consider, he said, is that because the potential \$100,000 Bilyeu project cost is unbudgeted, “that expenditure may cause other department road projects and work requirements to be delayed.”

One project that may be delayed, Suko said, is work on the Anderson Road Culvert on a fish stream in North County, near Nehalem. This is another culvert failure that occurred about two years ago.

He said the Road Department will be reviewing if storm damage repair costs will be affecting the amount of asphalt overlay that can be placed this summer.

A ray of hope is offered in the form of the governor’s formal declaration of a state of emergency in various counties, including Tillamook.

If assessments by state and federal agencies this week determine the county to be eligible for federal disaster assistance, he said, “the county may receive some financial relief from bearing the full cost of this road repair work and that of other sites in the county.”