

Willhite retiring from longtime county job

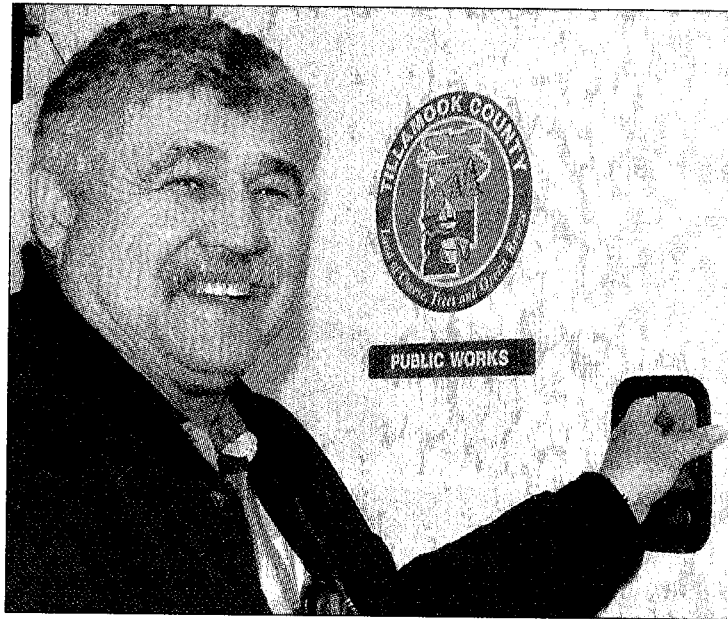
Nearly 35 years logged at Public Works Department

BY KEN O'TOOLE
Headlight-Herald Staff

TILLAMOOK — Bob Willhite, operations superintendent with Tillamook County Public Works for the past 15 years and a department employee for nearly 35 years, will be retiring April 27.

Actually, he was planning to leave in early January, but agreed to stay on to help ease the transition for new Public Works Director Liane Welch. She, along with the three road district foremen, will assume Willhite's duties. Because of funding uncertainties ahead for the department, his position will not be filled.

Welch said Willhite has been mentoring her on his duties, and that she will miss his knowledge, sense of humor and dedi-



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BOB WILLHITE

cation to his job.

She noted his vital role in helping the department respond to emergencies during the recent winter storms, during which he worked literally around the

clock.

"This was a challenging job," Willhite said. "I really loved it. It was something different every day."

He said he will especially

miss working with the crews, "and I really liked doing construction work."

There was a downside to the job, though, for both him and the crews he worked with.

"We just didn't have the revenue to do what we need to do for our infrastructure," he said. "So many roads have gone by the wayside because we didn't have the money to fix them (completely)."

Willhite, who likes to keep busy, is looking forward to having time to work around his place, and will probably be talked into taking on projects at the property of his son, Albert, who lives just up the road. Willhite and his wife, Marie, also have a grown daughter, Paula, who lives in Bonneville.

He and Marie will be doing some traveling, too. But there are likely to be some days when he'll miss being back in the trenches — literally and figuratively — at Public Works.

As he put it, "This is one job I've enjoyed."