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## **Overnight detours planned on I-84 west of La Grande**

LA GRANDE — Contractors for the Oregon Department of Transportation expect to open the Highway 244 bridge over Interstate 84 Friday, Sept. 19 following six months of construction. The Hilgard Interchange is located in northeastern Oregon seven miles west of La Grande at I-84 exit 252. The new 147-foot-long bridge on Highway 244 entirely spans I-84 using high-performance steel girders.

The following week workers will close Interstate 84 for three nights at the Hilgard Interchange. The closures will occur Monday, Sept. 22 through Wednesday, Sept. 24 from 8 p.m. each night to 6 a.m. the following morning.

I-84 traffic will detour around the work zone using the freeway off-ramps and on-ramps in each direction. Prior to the detour, the freeway will be reduced to single-lane travel, with traffic control and detour signs providing advance notice. Motorists are cautioned to slow down, watch for detour signs and drive with extra care in the area.

This closure will allow workers to demolish the old bridge over I-84. The work is part of a project to replace one bridge and repair five others on I-84 between Boardman and La Grande. ODOT's contractor, Wildish Standard Paving, expects to complete construction work this fall.

"Traffic will need to really slow down through this work zone, especially eastbound trucks coming down the Spring Creek Grade from Pendleton," said ODOT Public Information Officer Tom Strandberg. "The eastbound detour is at the bottom of a steep grade and instead of leveling out and following the freeway under the bridge traffic will turn right and continue heading downward using the off-ramp. At the bottom of the ramp is a sharp left turn to reconnect to the freeway on the opposite side of the interchange."

The detour for westbound traffic will be less challenging.

"Westbound traffic headed toward Pendleton will hit the detour after several winding turns that follow the Grande Ronde River," said Strandberg. "Motorists will take the exit 252 off-ramp to the top of the overpass bridge, then re-enter the freeway just before the steep climb into the Blue Mountains," said Strandberg.

Drivers should also watch for occasional daytime single-lane closures in both directions of I-84 near the Hilgard interchange beginning the week of Sept. 15.

Extra police patrols will help to enforce safe driving through the work zone and ensure traffic moves smoothly. Drivers should remember that traffic fines double in highway work zones.

Drivers should visit [www.TripCheck.com](http://www.TripCheck.com) or call 511 for current traffic information.

## ## ODOT ##



*The OTIA III State Bridge Delivery Program is part of the Oregon Department of Transportation's 10-year, \$3 billion Oregon Transportation Investment Act. OTIA funds will repair or replace hundreds of bridges, pave and maintain city and county roads, improve and expand interchanges, add new capacity to Oregon's highway system, and remove freight bottlenecks statewide. About 17 family-wage jobs are sustained for every \$1 million spent on transportation construction in Oregon. Each year during the OTIA program, construction projects will sustain about 5,000 family-wage jobs.*

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