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CASCADE AVENUE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT AWARDED FEDERAL GRANT

The City of Sisters received word today that the Cascade Avenue Improvement Project has been awarded a \$1.66 million grant from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). On Wednesday, August 17th U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood announced more than \$19.4 million in grants for Oregon to fund an array of highway-related efforts, including the improvements on US 20/Cascade Avenue in Sisters.

“This now brings the committed funding for the project to \$4.5 million” said Eileen Stein, City Manager. At a community workshop held on August 4th ODOT officials and the project design team estimated the cost of the project between \$5.5 million and \$6 million. Stein stated the project budget includes a large contingency amount which will be refined further as the design is completed. “Not all of the funding is in place yet, but this announcement represents a major step forward for the project,” said Stein.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) invited states to apply in June for federal funding from 14 grant programs. ODOT and city staff worked together on a submittal for the Cascade Avenue project earlier this year. Requests poured in from every state, Puerto Rico and Washington, D.C. - more than 1,800 applications, totaling nearly \$13 billion, which is more than 30 times the funds available.

Congress created the discretionary grant programs to give FHWA the latitude to support projects that maintain the nation's roads and bridges, improve roadway safety and make communities more livable. In previous years, Congress designated some of this grant money for specific projects and FHWA awarded the remainder through a competitive process. Because the FY11 budget passed by Congress last April directed that all such funds be discretionary, FHWA awarded these funds through a competitive process.

The design of the project is expected to be completed later this year. ODOT plans to bid the project in August 2012 and construction is slated for 2013.