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On Behalf Of: Baker County Emergency Management team
Committee: Joint Interim Committee On Transportation
Funding
Measure, Appointment or Topic: LC 2

Members of the Joint Interim Committee on Transportation funding. This letter is to give facts as to what will happen in our region if the ODOT carries out with their threat of layoffs. As you can see, it is not about accountability, it is cutting "boots on the ground". Taxes are not the right way to fund this department, but hold the administration accountable so that the worst case scenarios as detailed below do not happen.

"Last week a meeting was held to start the discussion of the regional impacts that might occur based on the current proposed budget for ODOT. I was going to wait to send this out after the Legislative session that is being held this week on this matter, because the outcome could negate the information below if funding is restored. However, there will likely be discussion throughout the state about this and so I wanted to pass along some key points from the meeting. As additional information is received I will follow up with you all in determining pre-planning meetings if needed based on the outcome.

Here is a high-level overview of presently planned changes to state highways:

Due to fewer staff (currently scheduled to be laid-off), many state highways in our region will not be maintained at night (night-shift resources will be focused on I-84). Some lower-traffic highways, such as highway 245 may receive no daytime plowing or be closed for periods of time during significant weather events or staff shortages. During emergencies, ODOT will do what they can to call-out staff to clear paths for ambulances, etc.

Swing-shifts are planned to be eliminated, resulting in morning and evening gaps (4:30-6 AM & PM) of no maintenance on Interstate 84 between shifts. Schedules are still being worked on so hours may change.

ODOT staff will probably not be available to staff road closures during storm events when plow drivers are a greater need. Snow park plowing will be deferred back to the USFS to contract-out.

What this means to local agencies as things currently stand:

EMS and other public safety agencies should review, and if necessary, begin conversations to update mutual aid agreements. For instance we may need to work

with Malheur County or Grant County for a faster response to the Unity area if HWY 245 is not a viable route.

School Districts should monitor the situation closely, as the absence of nighttime highway maintenance could significantly impact winter sports team travel back home after evening events.

Employers with early-starting or late-ending shifts should start to think about impacts of (and accommodations for?) employees who will have to commute on roads not planned to be maintained at night.

Once plans are finalized, it will be valuable to have operational discussions between emergency management, ODOT, dispatch center staff, and emergency response agency staff to discuss coordinated responses to storm events and incidents, continuity of local emergency responses on unmaintained roads, and timely and appropriate notification procedures to receive mutual aid in the form of out-of-county ambulances or snowplows to escort local ambulances."