



PLAID POWER:
The other player in the convenience market eyes future.



THE 'UNBANKED':
Lawmakers want credit unions to fill the gap.



SEARCH HITS:
It's the new thing in advertising and Portland's excited.

INSIDER SECURITY:
Cities will find it harder to annex new territory.

INSIDE

- Awards/Achievements 27
- Business Leads 29-31
- Calendar 28
- Classifieds 34-37
- Directory of Services 38
- Executive Profile 25
- Focus 15-20
- How-To 22
- List 19, 20
- Opinion 39
- People on the Move 26
- Reader Guide 38
- Strategies 21
- Week in Review 13

MARKETING FIRMS:
Whom to go to when you need something pitched.

THE LIST | 19, 20

DAILY UPDATE: Get top business news. Sign up for daily email alert

PORTLAND BUSINESS JOURNAL

PORTLAND, OREGON

BUSINESS NEWS FROM THE FOUR-COUNTY REGION

CIRCUIT SALES:
Small technology company seizes the opportunity to jump on the Internet before the competition.

STRATEGIES | 21



JUNE 1, 2007



The Mill Creek Bridge in Salem was demolished to make way for a replacement bridge in South Salem. COURTESY OF ODOT

Slow work ahead

State transportation officials worry about looming worker shortage

BY WENDY CULVERWELL
BUSINESS JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

Across the state, work crews are tearing into highways and bridges in a massive effort to wrangle Oregon's transportation network into the modern era.

A less obvious development is taking place beyond the reach of road crews and their brightly colored machinery. Behind the scenes, the Oregon Department of Transportation faces the equally gargantuan challenge of ensuring there are enough qualified workers to do the job.

In Oregon alone, 15,000 new workers are needed to meet growing demand and to replace retirements by 2012.

Four years ago, the Legislature authorized a \$2.5 billion transportation construction program in the form of the Oregon Transportation Investment Act, or OTIA. It gave ODOT the giant task of repairing and often replacing roads and bridges in the name of both safety and commerce.

The first phase, completed in 2005, tackled the

SEE ODOT, PAGE 33

Cargo pours through port

New shipping lines, auto imports spur rapid growth

BY MATTHEW KISH
BUSINESS JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

The Port of Portland is on pace for the best year of any major West Coast cargo port.

The port moved the equivalent of 80,000 20-foot cargo containers in the first four months of 2007, a 58 percent increase from last year.

"We're forecasting increases across the board in every category," said Josh Thomas, a port spokesman. "We're seeing sustained growth."

The growth comes at a time when cargo

FAST FACTS

THE PORT set a record for auto imports last year, unloading about 460,000 new cars, and expects to exceed that total in 2007.

Ports	Cargo*	Percent change from 2006
Port of Portland	80,036	57.9%
Port of Los Angeles	2,450,441	8.4%
Port of Long Beach	2,253,015	-1.0%
Port of Seattle	603,190	-2.6%
Port of Oakland	742,206	-2.7%
Port of Tacoma	623,777	-4.0%

*Numbers represent the number of 20-foot equivalent units or small cargo containers moved through end of April.

Source: Individual ports' Web sites

Precision joins business elite on S&P 500 index

Fortune 500 slot could be within reach in '08

BY MATTHEW KISH
BUSINESS JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

After another impressive quarter, Precision Castparts Corp. has joined one elite business list and is on the verge of being added to another.

FAST |
PRECISEK PARTS: most like to join Nike Fortune? party w

PORTLAND BUSINESS JOURNAL | JUNE 1, 2007

portland.bizjournals.com

FROM THE FRONT | 33

ODOT: Worker recruitment effort dovetails with other state priorities

FROM PAGE 1

23 bridges between Portland and Klamath Falls, as well as Bond to Ontario. By securing those corridors first, construction planners set up safe routes for future truckers and travelers when the most disruptive aspects of the work hit the state's biggest and most used freeways — Interstates 84 and 5.

Construction along those corridors, including in the Portland area, is expected to peak in 2008 and 2009.

The heavy-duty overhaul will take a decade and comes as a wave of retirements is expected to decimate the ranks of capable construction workers, especially those qualified for the heavy job of road- and bridge-building.

The employment numbers being banded about by labor economists were disquieting, said ODOT Director Matthew Garrett.

For ODOT, the problem crystallized into a mission. Since it was creating demand for qualified workers, it needed to help develop a new supply as well.

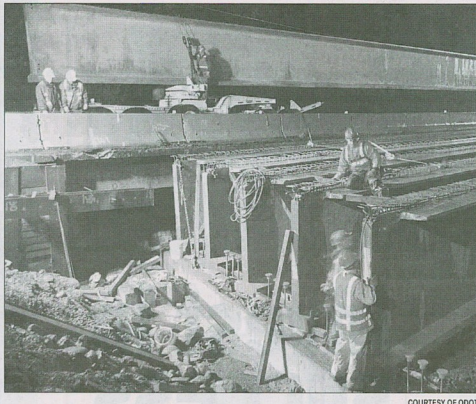
"With the investment came the opportunity and with that opportunity came a reality," Garrett said.

The answer is an ambitious work force effort resulting in a pool of prequalified workers that highway contractors can turn to when they bid on public jobs.

ODOT teaming with labor unions, contractors and unemployment agencies across the state, is actively recruiting even more prospective apprentices to the bridge work force.

The apprentices in turn are available to contractors and can use the experience to become licensed electricians, cement workers, carpenters and more. To access the labor pool, the contractors and subcontractors working on road and bridge projects around the state can tap the Oregon Employment Department's database, iMatchSkills.org.

The program is funded with a \$1.8 million federal work force development grant and is in its earliest stages.



The Alder Creek Bridge project on Highway 26 broke new ground with prestressed concrete beams. COURTESY OF ODOT

As of this week, ODOT tallied 27 willing workers in its fledgling labor pool, most of them in Portland. A handful have even started working at highway construction sites in the Pendleton area.

The shortage is real, said David Dixon, an ODOT civil rights specialist in the Portland area. Contractors say they're already having difficulty filling some positions; welders are in particular demand.

The construction worker shortage is hardly confined to Oregon.

The National Center for Construction Education and Research estimates there will be 1 million new construction jobs in the United States within seven years.

Garrett, along with Michael Cobb, manager of ODOT's Office of Civil

Rights, say OTIA-funded construction projects provide the perfect opportunity to bring interested workers to the field and send them into apprenticeship programs leading to good-paying careers with the potential for union benefits.

Making the rounds of various job fairs and school career programs, ODOT officials are telling students and anyone else that the industry has changed because of demanding new building practices.

"This is not your father's construction trades," Garrett said. "Unless you have a family member [working in construction], you probably have an impression that may be dated about what these good folks do."

The minimum requirements to join the labor pool are basic — 18 years of age, a

valid driver's license and a ninth-grade education. Once in, ODOT and its partners can work with people who want to complete their high school education.

Dixon said he's taken his pitch to schools and trade shows. The idea isn't to offer a job but the path to a career. Entry-level workers can earn \$14 to \$16 an hour. Journeymen earn \$28 to \$36 an hour and qualify for union-sponsored benefits.

ODOT's partners include the Oregon Employment Department, Bureau of Labor and Industries, Portland Community College, Associated General Contractors and more. Many already are working on the pending labor shortage; ODOT's efforts are designed to complement rather than supplant them, Garrett said.

The labor pool initiative dovetails well with ODOT's renewed commitment to award contracts to small businesses owned by women and minorities.

Cobb, the civil rights manager, said a common complaint centers on the difficulty of doing business with ODOT. Barriers include high insurance and bond requirements that make small jobs a money-loser for small business. The state's 45-day payment schedule is burdensome for small businesses that can't afford to carry accounts that long.

"I wanted to move beyond talk and rhetoric," Cobb said.

Solutions include smaller contracts with lower risk and lower bond and insurance requirements and paying invoices more frequently than every 45 days, he said.

ODOT stresses the importance of small businesses getting certified through the Office of Minority, Women and Emerging Small Business. Only about 2,000 of the estimated 10,000 Oregon businesses eligible for certification actually go through the process, which tells prospective employers that a business is sound and will help it meet diverse hiring goals.

"You have to suit up," Garrett said.

valid driver's license and a ninth-grade education. Once in, ODOT and its partners can work with people who want to complete their high school education.

Dixon said he's taken his pitch to schools and trade shows. The idea isn't to offer a job but the path to a career. Entry-level workers can earn \$14 to \$16 an hour. Journeymen earn \$28 to \$36 an hour and qualify for union-sponsored benefits.

ODOT's partners include the Oregon Employment Department, Bureau of Labor and Industries, Portland Community College, Associated General Contractors and more. Many already are working on the pending labor shortage; ODOT's efforts are designed to complement rather than supplant them, Garrett said.

The labor pool initiative dovetails well with ODOT's renewed commitment to award contracts to small businesses owned by women and minorities.

Cobb, the civil rights manager, said a common complaint centers on the difficulty of doing business with ODOT. Barriers include high insurance and bond requirements that make small jobs a money-loser for small business. The state's 45-day payment schedule is burdensome for small businesses that can't afford to carry accounts that long.

"I wanted to move beyond talk and rhetoric," Cobb said.

Solutions include smaller contracts with lower risk and lower bond and insurance requirements and paying invoices more frequently than every 45 days, he said.

ODOT stresses the importance of small businesses getting certified through the Office of Minority, Women and Emerging Small Business. Only about 2,000 of the estimated 10,000 Oregon businesses eligible for certification actually go through the process, which tells prospective employers that a business is sound and will help it meet diverse hiring goals.

"You have to suit up," Garrett said.