

May 2005

# US 12 UPDATE

Mailing Label

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## SPECIAL MENTION

**State Funding:**  
The Washington State Legislature recently provided an additional \$56 million to fund improvements in the US 12 corridor. Lawmakers allocated \$20 million for the US 12/SR 124 interchange and \$36 million for the McDonald Road to Walla Walla project (Phase 6).

**Last Chance Update:**  
WSDOT plans to construct an intersection for the Last Chance area. It will be located about 1/4 mile west of the current intersection.

**Pine Street Update:**  
The intersection of Pine Street and US 12 will be improved to an interchange, to reduce future accidents and congestion.



## A PRODUCTIVE PARTNERSHIP

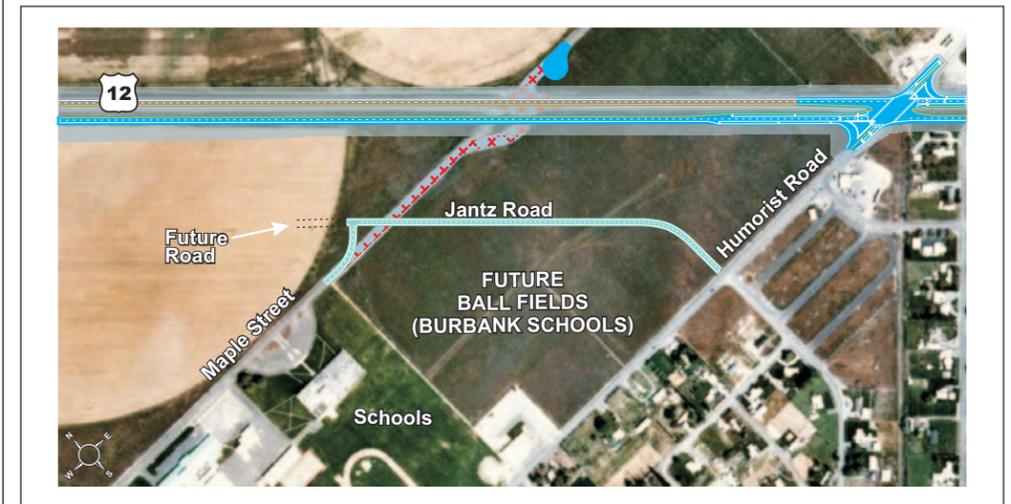
In order to save time and money, a partnership has been formed between the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), the Columbia School District, the Port of Walla Walla, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.

WSDOT is currently in the process of adding two new lanes to US Highway 12 between SR 124 and Casey Pond. This is Phase 2 of the work to four-lane US Highway 12 from Burbank to Walla Walla. The construction of Phase 2 required removing part of a hillside near

Casey Pond at the east end of the project. In the original plan, that dirt would be hauled to the other end of the project and used to build up a base for the new highway near the Snake River Bridge.

Ben Small, Superintendent of the Columbia School District in Burbank, has been an active participant in update meetings regarding Phase 2. When he heard that WSDOT would have to haul material from one end of the project to the other, he had an idea.

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Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Information: Individuals requiring reasonable accommodations may request written materials in alternate formats, sign language interpreters, physical accessibility accommodations, or other reasonable accommodation by contacting the event sponsor, Mike Westbay, at (509) 577-1617, usually two weeks before the meeting dates (May 11 & 12). Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing may call the Washington State Telecommunications Relay Service at 7-1-1, and ask to be connected to Mike Westbay's phone number.

*(Coalition - Continued from Page 1)*

The Coalition commissioned Joyce Anderson, a Walla Walla artist, to create a watercolor drawing of the Casey Pond wildlife area. It reflects the Washington State Department of Transportation's commitment to enhancing the safety of US Highway 12 while protecting and improving the environmental character of the Casey Pond area.

If you wish to obtain a copy of the drawing, please contact the Port of Walla Walla at (509) 525-3100.



US Highway 12 Coalition's Phase 1 Commemorative Drawing by Joyce Anderson

Visit us on the Web!  
<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/US12SR124Wallula/>

**MAKING PROGRESS  
FOR SAFETY**



## COALITION'S CORNER

On March 23, 2005, the Port of Walla Walla hosted a US Highway 12 Coalition meeting in Walla Walla with Representative Cathy McMorris in attendance. Representative McMorris announced a 4.3 million dollar earmark in federal funds for the US 12 corridor, from the Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (TEA-LU).

Representative McMorris was presented with a commemorative drawing that was unveiled by the US Highway 12 Coalition.



**Left to right:** Walla Walla City Council Member Jerry Cummins, County Commissioner David Carey, Port Commissioner Ken Jantz, Artist Joyce Anderson, Representative McMorris, and College Place Mayor Ed Ammon

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## MEET THE NEWEST US 12 PROJECT ENGINEER



Will Smith is the newest WSDOT Project Engineer to join in the four-laning of US Highway 12.

As the Construction Engineer for Phase 2, SR 124 to McNary Pool, Will should have a busy summer getting the project finished. With the mild weather this

past winter and time saved by coordinating with the Columbia School District (see *A Productive Partnership on page 1*), construction is progressing well and he has hopes to finish the project ahead of schedule.

Will grew up in Royal City, Washington, and earned his Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from Oregon Institute of Technology. He has been employed with WSDOT for 14 years, and he says he enjoys being a part of the projects that are being built.

When asked if there was anything else he might want the public to know, he said "Please, slow down and be patient. We want to make sure everyone is safe out there."

## STATE, FEDERAL AND TRIBAL LEADERS SIGN HISTORIC AGREEMENT

On Thursday, March 10, 2005, an historic agreement was signed by Dan Mathis of the Federal Highway Administration-Washington Division (FHWA), Don Whitehouse of the Washington State Department of Transportation-South Central Region (WSDOT SCR), and Antone Minthorn of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR). The document is the first Programmatic Memorandum of Agreement in the State of Washington between Federal, State, and Tribal Governments.

"The agreement is the first of many that are planned between the transportation agencies and tribes. It is a model for six other similar agreements among the agencies and tribes in Washington State", said Colleen Jollie, WSDOT Tribal Liaison.



Don Whitehouse (left) and Antone Minthorn

The agreement states: "...respectful

of each other's legitimate values and goals, the FHWA, the WSDOT SCR, and the CTUIR agree to establish and maintain a relationship based on open dialog, mutual respect and early coordination...that allows for the opportunity for tribal input on actions by the FHWA and WSDOT SCR...and to cooperatively work together to implement the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and other issues of mutual concern. The goal of this dialog is to allow the lead agencies to use this input to identify impacts to the social, cultural, natural, and economic environments and seek opportunities to avoid and minimize those impacts..."

At the signing ceremony on Thursday, Antone Minthorn, Chairman of the Board of Trustees for the CTUIR, and Don Whitehouse, Regional administrator for WSDOT SCR, made the commitment to an open communication process that maintains the spirit of this agreement and that of Government-to-Government consultation. "Communication, coordination, and education through information sharing will be key in implementing this programmatic agreement," Whitehouse said.

John Barkley, Chairman of the CTUIR General Council and President of the Northwest Tribal Employment Rights Organization (TERO), also commended the group for recognizing the importance of transportation projects to economic development and employment opportunities for tribal members and tribally owned business.

estimated \$200,000, and WSDOT's contractor, Steelman-Duff, saved time and expense since the needed fill material did not have to be hauled in from the opposite end of the project.

The tough question was "What should be done with the material that needs to be removed from the hillside on the east end of the highway project?"

Ben Small spoke with local farmers and contractors to inquire if they had any need for the dirt, but he came up empty handed. He then began negotiations with other state agencies. In the end, the Bureau of Reclamation provided a location for the extra material just to the west of the hillside it was removed from.

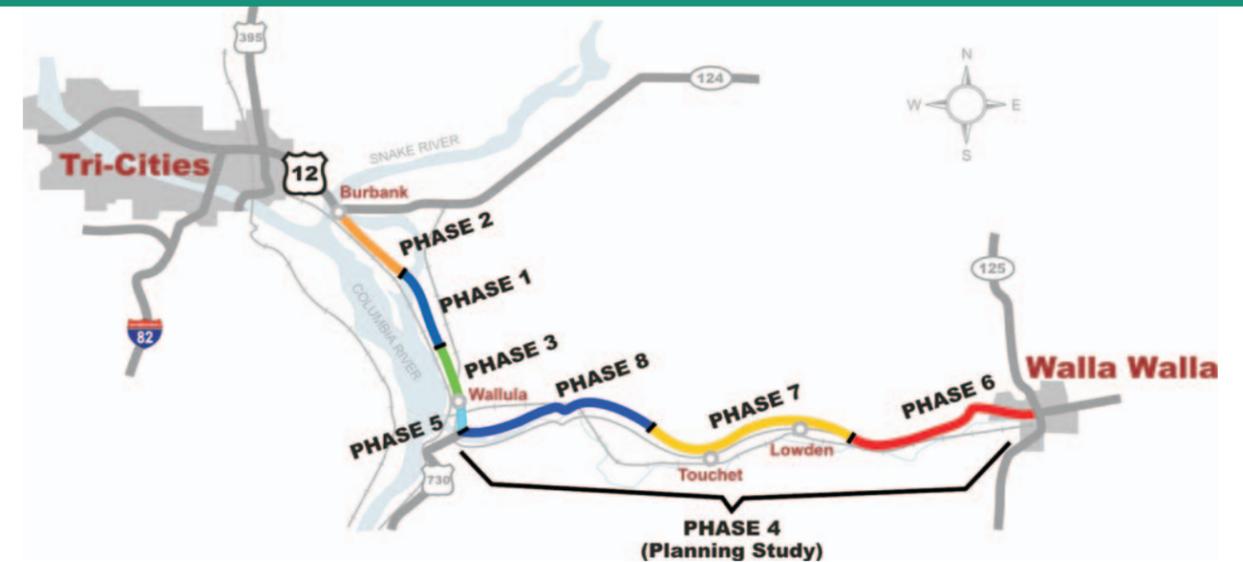
(Partnership - Continued from Page 1)

The Columbia School District plans to build three new softball fields and three new baseball fields for their high school and middle school. In order to accomplish this, 22 acres of school property needed to be leveled, which meant moving approximately 60,000 cubic yards of dirt. The ball field area is at the west end of Phase 2, where fill dirt is needed to build up the new highway.

Ben Small proposed that WSDOT take the dirt from the ball field area and use it for their highway construction, which would eliminate the need to haul from the east end of the project. WSDOT agreed.

This was a big win for both parties. The Columbia School District got their ball field area leveled, saving an

## PROJECT UPDATES



**PHASE 1 - US 12 McNary Pool to Attalia** *This project added an additional lane in each direction from Casey Pond to the Dodd Road area, replaced a bridge, and constructed environmental mitigation features. Work was completed on August 6, 2004.*

**PHASE 2 - SR 124 to McNary Pool** *This project will add one additional lane in each direction from SR 124 to Casey Pond for a total of four lanes. Construction is currently underway. Quincy Road is paved and work to alter three irrigation structures is complete. The new lanes are built and paving began in May.*

**PHASE 3 - Attalia Vicinity** *This project will add one additional lane in each direction from the Dodd Road area to the Boise Cascade area for a total of four lanes. Design work is underway. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2006.*

**PHASE 4 - Walla Walla to Wallula Planning Study** *This planning study, which encompasses Phases 6, 7, and 8, will investigate and document existing social, economic, and environmental conditions. The preferred alignment of US 12 from Walla Walla to the Wallula Junction will be determined. Preliminary design and environmental documentation continues with the main focus being on Phases 6 and 8.*

**PHASE 5 - Attalia Vicinity to US 730** *This project will add one additional lane in each direction from the Boise Cascade area to the Wallula Junction for a total of four lanes. Design for Phase 5 is scheduled to begin in 2006.*

**PHASE 6 - McDonald Road to Walla Walla** *This project will change the alignment and location of US 12 from the McDonald Road area to Walla Walla and expand it to a four-lane divided highway. Recent progress includes preliminary environmental reports, identification of a preferred highway location, and preliminary designs of three intersections and an interchange.*

**PHASE 7 - Nine Mile Hill to McDonald Road** *This project will reconstruct US 12 from Nine Mile Hill to the McDonald Road area as a four-lane divided highway. Preliminary design has identified corridors for further environmental and engineering studies. This project is not currently funded for design or construction.*

**PHASE 8 - Wallula Junction to Nine Mile Hill** *This project will reconstruct US 12 from the Wallula Junction to Nine Mile Hill as a four-lane divided highway. Preliminary design has identified corridors for further environmental and engineering studies. This project is not currently funded for design or construction.*

**These projects will expand the two-lane highway to a four-lane divided highway between Burbank and Walla Walla. This work will improve safety, decrease congestion, and enhance economic vitality.**

**IT'S YOUR NICKEL. WATCH IT WORK.**

These projects are funded in part by the 2003 Legislative Transportation Funding Package. The main source of funding is a 5¢ increase in the gas tax. The package also includes an increase in the large truck gross weight fee and a 0.3 percent vehicle sales tax.

### CONTACT INFORMATION

**Phase 2**  
Will Smith, Project Engineer  
(509)-577-1840  
smithw@wsdot.wa.gov

**Phases 3, 5**  
Troy Suing, Project Engineer  
(509)-577-1703  
suingt@wsdot.wa.gov

**Phases 4, 6, 7, 8**  
Kerry Grant, Project Engineer  
(509)-577-1760  
grantk@wsdot.wa.gov