

# Small town of Echo celebrates big accomplishments

June 13, 2013



The small community of Echo, located 20 miles west of Pendleton in northeast Oregon, packs quite a punch when it comes to catching your eye. From the beautiful flower baskets hanging below vintage light posts, to the unique circular planters with old bicycles and whimsical figures amid colorful blooms (the edge of the planters also double as seating), the downtown view says “welcome” in a big way. All along Main Street, which also serves as Oregon Highway 320, and on numerous side streets, visitors will discover early 1900’s architecture, inviting pocket parks, decorated storefronts with friendly merchants inside, vintage style drinking fountains and even an iron horse-

head hitching post.

Creating this idyllic vision has been a work in process for many years. And, while there is still more to do, the City spent a few hours on June 13 to celebrate the completion of their most recent downtown project.

“This project was the result of an ODOT Transportation Growth Management planning grant followed by primary funding from a Federal Transportation Enhancement (TE) Grant administered by ODOT,” said Echo City Manager Diane Berry.



Berry has worked with the City for the past three decades and is extremely proud of the improvements the community has made and thankful for the hard work put in by numerous partners, including ODOT staff.

“We have a really good relationship with ODOT,” Berry said, commending the efforts of ODOT planners Cheryl Jarvis-Smith and Patrick Knight, Transportation Enhancement Program Coordinator Pat Fisher, Local Agency Liaison Mike Barry, Project Leader Tim Rynearson and many others.

Transportation Enhancement dollars, combined with donations and other funding sources helped pay for sidewalk upgrades that included bulb-outs, ADA ramps and brick pavers, plus street lights and the very cool circular planter/benches. Additional rectangular planters were also installed at very down to earth prices. Make that six feet down, as the City purchased ready made concrete coffin vaults for planter boxes at a fraction of the cost quoted to fabricate similar units. Those cost savings helped pay for some of the aesthetic improvements that really raised the spirits of the community.

Berry said the community improvements are already attracting new businesses to town. An antique store and pub have moved in, plus a local vineyard has opened a wine shop and tasting room in one of the city’s historic buildings.



“They could have easily had the tasting room at their vineyard, but choose to located downtown,” Berry said.

“This is a great example of what Transportation Enhancement projects can do,” Fisher said. “This project brings together transportation enhancement and economic development.”

Without the funding support from ODOT and others, plus donated items and dedicated citizen volunteers, Berry thought her town might still look the same as it did thirty years ago.

“Not much to attract folks to town other than the history buffs,” Berry said, highlighting the numerous historic buildings and connection to the Oregon Trail.

“This project has really awakened the town,” said Echo Mayor Richard Winter, giving special thanks to Berry for her decades of public service and creativity. “Echo is such an incredible town, so loving.”



*ODOT's Cheryl Jarvis-Smith, Tim Ryneerson, Pat Fisher and Mike Barry received recognition for their support of the Echo Downtown enhancement project*