



Emily Bonsant/News-Register

Wolfgang Tasa of McMinnville moves traffic cones during sidewalk construction on East Main Street in Carlton. Tasa is participating in construction workforce training with the Youth Opportunity Program, which partnered with the city of Carlton, SEDCOR and Willamette Workforce Partnership for the project. Other workforce trainees Harold Crow of Newberg and Emma Oglesby of McMinnville grab additional equipment as the crew helps install the sidewalk. The project will result in 822 feet of new sidewalk.

Paving the path forward

YOOP participants learn construction skills while helping rebuild Carlton sidewalks

By **EMILY BONSAANT**
Of the News-Register

On East Main Street in Carlton, old sidewalks have been pulled up and new ones installed throughout August and September.

“I had no idea it was this complicated to build sidewalks,” Michael Van Houten said.

Local teens and young adults participating in the Youth Opportunity Program (YOOP) have been helping with the street repair project that includes 822 linear feet of sidewalk, which are wider than before to be ADA compliant.

The city of Carlton partnered with the Willamette Workforce Partnership/YOOP and SEDCOR to extend the sidewalk improvement project into an opportunity for local youth to learn construction skills while being paid.

YOOP is a program of Chehalem Youth and Family Services and is the county’s youth workforce service provider in partnership with WWP.

“This Youth Sidewalk Program really is a win, win, win type project,” said Abisha Stone, economic development manager for SEDCOR. “The city receives infrastructure support, local youth receive hands-on job training and local trade industries benefit from the impact of training for future workforce.”

YOOP provides educational and vocational opportunities to low-income youth to overcome barriers such as school dropout, parenting, substance abuse, criminal background, foster care, disability or homelessness.

Although the program is designed for youths aged 14 to 24, Van Houten, 33, can participate because he was enrolled before turning 24. YOOP provides him with the work training and assistance he needs while accommodating his special needs.

Through the construction, he learned he enjoys shoveling gravel.

“It helps me get frustration out,” he said

“The city receives infrastructure support, local youth receive hands-on job training and local trade industries benefit from the impact of training for future workforce.” — **Abisha Stone, SEDCOR**

with a smile.

Under the tutelage of contractor Willy Kostenborder and his crew, YOOP participants have been introduced to the construction trade.

“They are great hard-working kids,” Kostenborder told the News-Register.

Workforce trainees are not certified for some of the work, such as using the excavator or installing drain lines. But that didn’t stop YOOP participant Wolfgang Tasa, 17, from McMinnville to absorb all the lessons he could watching the professionals.

Tasa hopes to gain experience that will help with future job opportunities.

“I want to do construction,” he said, noting his father was a pipelayer.

Once the old sidewalk is pulled up and the base widened, the youth work crew laid gravel. Working alongside the professional construction crew, they mixed concrete and began pouring.

Looking back at the first half block of sidewalk finished, Carlton resident Jeremiah Adair, 17, was proud his work is making a difference for his community.

Harold Crow, 21, of Newberg also enjoys the manual and skilled labor that comes with construction.

“I think it’s cool. I like building stuff and using my hands,” he said.

Emma Oglesby, 17, of McMinnville did all the brush work from the first section of sidewalk on the block between First and Second streets.

She’s done other job training with YOOP, including retail. She enjoys hands-on work but had no prior construction experience.

“YOOP recommends internships even if it’s a job you’re not sure you’ll like,” she said. “I might do construction again. I don’t mind it, but I don’t want to pursue

it long term.”

While unsure what she wants for a career, Oglesby believes someone her age shouldn’t be expected to have their future already planned out.

“It’s really a weird thing, as someone whose prefrontal cortex is not yet developed, I’m expected to make decisions for my future,” she said.

Sidewalk construction on East Main began in August and is expected to continue into October. Carlton Public Works will be inspecting the sidewalks.

Stone said more Yamhill County cities are interested in similar opportunities that include workforce training in construction projects.

“It’s a true public and private partnership,” Dean Craig, Business Services Director at WWP said, noting that industry partners make the workforce training possible.

The project was supported by Aileron, The Powers Family Foundation, Kamph Rock Crushing, Universal Forest Products and The Ground.

For more information about YOOP, visit www.myyoop.org.

Willamina lift stations need \$7M in repairs

The News-Register staff

City of Willamina officials will speak with prospective funders about sewer lift replacements on Friday, Sept. 26, at city hall.

This will be an internal meeting and not open to the public.

The meeting is deemed “one stop” as city officials hope to tell Willamina’s story just once before potential funders and city partnering agencies at the meeting. The goal is to obtain as much grant funding as possible for the estimated cost of \$7.3 million for replacement.

Wastewater improvements are becoming a necessity because of recent residential and commercial development growth and anticipated future housing.

Currently, the city’s sanitary sewer system consists of two main basins, one in the north and one in the south. Both have their own lift stations that transport flow to Willamina’s wastewater treatment lagoon system.

After treatment, the water is discharged into the South Yamhill River, where the cities of Sheridan and Amity also draw and discharge water.

After an evaluation, Willamina found both lift stations have deficiencies. Their electrical systems, emergency power and controls are outdated, and fail to meet the Department of Environmental Quality capacity. As population grows and development continues, capacity will need to be increased.

Within the application for the One Stop Meeting, Willamina City Manager Bridget Meleney wrote, “during severe storm events, the lift stations have even overflowed raw sewage into the South Yamhill.”

Meleney noted that should no action be taken, further deterioration and capacity problems could persist, and the city may face fines from DEQ.

Meleney told the News-Register the results of the meeting will be presented at a forthcoming Willamina City Council meeting.

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