

160816GOS media release



“Grove of the States to be restored in time for 50th birthday”

Oregon Travel Experience is pleased to announce the initial phase of the Grove of the States Restoration Project will begin on Monday, August 22, 2016, at the southbound French Prairie Rest Area (I-5 Milepost 281, south of Wilsonville). French Prairie is Oregon’s busiest rest area, with approximately 2 million travelers a year stopping on each side.

The Grove of the States is believed to be the oldest arboretum of state trees in the US and was originally a collection of trees from 53 US states and territories. The Grove was conceived and implemented by former Oregon Attorney General Robert Thornton in the mid-1960s, as a way to honor Lady Bird Johnson’s Highway Beautification Act.

As the Grove nears its 50th birthday next summer, project partners agree that a full restoration is needed to ensure this unique historical resource is retained for future generations. Restoration project partners (including Friends of Trees and the Oregon Department of Forestry) are sourcing new and replacement trees that will be planted in early 2017. The Grove will be re-dedicated for its 50th anniversary in August 2017.

“Unfortunately, the original planting-plan did not allow adequate space for the state trees to reach maturity,” said Paul Ries, an urban forester with the Oregon Department of Forestry.

“As a result of their canopies being suppressed by adjacent Douglas-fir trees, many of the original state trees have died or are in extremely poor health and will not survive without additional room to grow,” Ries added.

The restoration effort will correct the spacing between specimens, replace lost or dying trees, expand the arboretum footprint, construct new walking paths, and install Grove of the States interpretive signs within the rest area. New individual tree signs also will be installed.

Due to the initial phase of contractor work on the Grove, southbound French Prairie Rest Area may experience intermittent closures or partial lane closures (along the rest area ramp) during the day from August 22 - 26.

Approximately 40 Douglas-fir trees of the more than 900 in this part of the rest area will be removed; several for public safety reasons (trees deemed hazardous) others thinned to promote overall tree health and the Grove’s survival.



Sponsorships and in-kind contributions will help to pay for this project. Corporate, small business, non-profit and individual tree sponsors will be recognized on Grove signage, promotional materials and on the Travel Information Council website.

For more information about the Grove of the States, the full media packet, sponsorship package, and our one page fact sheet, connect to the OTE website homepage at www.ortravelexperience.com, and the Grove of the States Restoration page. Materials and images are available to the press by email request to admin@oregonte.com.

About OTE

The Oregon Travel Information Council (doing business as Oregon Travel Experience) is a semi-independent state agency. Our mission is to create a great visitor experience by providing direction to destinations, connecting travelers with Oregon resources, and ensuring safe and convenient travel. We collaborate with local communities to showcase Oregon's history through the official Oregon Heritage Tree and Historical Marker Programs. We manage 29 rest areas at 17 locations across the state—and issue permits for our state's highway business signs and travel information kiosks.

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