



From left: Mike Fisk, Claude White, Bryan Cloe, Bob Orem, Troutdale Mayor Jim Kight, Wendell Snook, Fortunato Flores, and Ken Lange.

Advanced planning and swift response averts flood disaster and earns high praise from Troutdale's Mayor

On Saturday, John Szymik, Project Engineer at Hamilton's bridge replacement project at the Sandy River Bridge on I-84 at Troutdale, had planned to snow shoe on Mt. Hood. As he approached Timberline Lodge and saw the river of water washing down the mountain roads, he knew where that water was bound and thought to himself, "This isn't good – I better turn around and go back to work."

Later that day John and Hamilton operator Shawn Bunch watched nervously from the Sandy River Bridge as the water rose carrying with it a growing amount of debris. At



"Thanks to the foresight of Hamilton, ODOT, Oregon Bridge Delivery Partners, and Multnomah County we were prepared for the unexpected and because of our precautions, we were able to avert a major flood event for the 93 residents within the flood plain. I would like to give a big shout out and thank you to the Hamilton employees and subcontractors for working so quickly to deal with this situation." --Troutdale Mayor Jim Kight

first, as logs and debris accumulated at the bridge, John and Shawn attempted to push it through, but on Sunday (January 16th) as the waters began to rise at almost a foot an hour they realized they were fighting a losing battle.

Six inches of rain in a 24-hour period combined with an unseasonable warm front and seven feet of snow melt, created a wall of water hurdling down

from the Mt. Hood source of the Sandy that brought with it logs, snags, whole buildings, large propane tanks and more assorted debris. When the high water crested around 8 pm on Sunday, it had risen just under the work bridge stringers, and at 21 feet above normal, the highest any time since 1996 when the last memorable floods had hit the region.

By Monday, January 17,

when the full crew returned to the Sandy River Bridge, a mountain of debris had accumulated. As Hamilton's Sandy River Bridge Project Manager Wendell Snook explained, breaking up the log jam as quickly as possible was critical to prevent flooding for nearly 100 residents along the banks of the Sandy as well as the Columbia Gorge Outlet Mall.

What ensued was a full scale logging operation in the Sandy. Concerned for his constituents, Troutdale Mayor Jim Kight, kept in close communication with Snook, personally visited the site, and helped to manage communication between stakeholders and the Portland-area news media covering the situation. Hamilton subcontractors who assisted included Wayne Stone Logging who set up a yarder on the East Bank of the river, Staton Co., Pok Wan, and Peter Akhtar Trucking Co. Additional personnel were called in from Hamilton's Broadway Bridge and Willamette River Bridge projects.

As Mayor Kight explained, earlier in the year, he had been involved in discussions where ODOT realized the need for flood mitigation and the decision was made to remove a work bridge at the site in anticipation something like this might happen. *Continued on page 3.*



John Szymik

High Water Heroes *(Continued from page 1.)*

Back to Work at Sandy River Bridge

Now, with water levels back to normal, Wendell and the crew at Sandy River are preparing to do what Hamilton does best and what we intended from the start: replace the bridge. As Wendell explains, the removal of the work bridge deck in anticipation of the winter high water has caused need for some rescheduling. In April, work will start heating up with the rebuilding of work bridges, demolition of the old bridge should begin in June. Snook said HCo fabrication crews are busy preparing materials for the building of the work bridge and the six coffer dams which will allow crews access for drilled shafts and columns. Hamilton will place both east and westbound traffic onto a new eastbound bridge. Double duty use of the new

eastbound bridge will allow the detour bridge to be used as a work bridge during westbound bridge construction eliminating the need to construct a second work bridge, reducing the total number of pile in the river, which has become a project requirement due to environmental limitation on in-water work.

Two big challenges on this job Wendell points out, are the short in-water work windows and the flood mitigation directives that prevent the use of work bridges during the winter months. But where others see problems, Hamilton sees opportunities for innovation, and this is one of those situations: Wendell's team is working with Hamilton Project Manager Steve Brown to adapt a gantry crane/beam launching system originally developed at Hamilton's Eddyville site as a solution for difficult access situ-

Fun Fact: About 40 truckloads of logs pulled from the Sandy River Bridge were actually hauled back up to Mt. Hood where the Freshwater Trust is using them to re-establish fish habitat as part of their Salmon River Aquatic Habitat Restoration Project. The overall goal of the project is to increase the abundance and productivity of Sandy River basin salmon and steelhead.

ations. The system will allow 165 ft. long steel girders to be "launched" from shore by a gantry crane, placed on the Hamilton designed launching girders which in effect become their own track for the gantry crane to roll along to place subsequent beams. Not as efficient as a work bridge, but a smart alternative when you can't have one. ■