



Linn County NEWS



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Mill City pedestrian bridge work nears completion

MILL CITY — The 136-year-old Mill City pedestrian bridge — officially the Mill City Southern Pacific Rail Bridge — will soon sport a new coat of paint to go along with an extensive structural renovation overseen by the Linn County Road Department.

Workers from FD Thomas Painting, based in Medford have been busy setting up containment materials under and around the former railroad bridge that was recently added to the National Register of Historic Places.

“They have been working on this bridge since March,” said Dan Leard, a Linn County senior engineering technician.

Leard said rotted wooden decking has been removed and replaced and steel tressles have been installed.

Abutments on either end of the bridge have been upgraded and new concrete decking poured.

The project’s general contractor is Farline Bridge Company of Stayton.

The bridge renovation is part of a three-pronged project that includes work on the traffic bridge over the North Santiam River and upgrading Broadway Street. It is being paid for in part by an \$8.1 million federal TIGER Grant (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery.)

“This bridge is very important to this community,” Leard said. “It’s the focal point.”

Painters will use an abrasive to re-



Built in 1885, the Mill City pedestrian bridge is getting a facelift and new paint. Right: Linn County senior engineering technician Dan Leard says the project has gone well.

move debris and rust and then spray two coats of primer and a coat of new paint.

The 120-foot bridge was constructed in 1885 in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania and spent the first several years of its existence in San Jose, California. It was moved to Lake Oswego in 1901 and to Mill City in 1919.

In its heyday, the bridge — which is of a wrought-iron Phoenix Column style — was the main way timber and lumber products were transported out of the bustling Santiam Canyon.

The last time it carried a train was



1971 and in 1991, it was converted to pedestrian use only in 1991.

Community members raised \$400,000 toward its renovation.