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BREAKING FEATURED

OSU implodes west side of Reser Stadium

Maddie Pfeifer

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Corvallis residents and beyond were treated to a loud boom on Friday morning, Jan. 7, when workers set explosives and imploded the west side of Oregon State University's Reser Stadium to make way for **future upgrades**.

- **See photo gallery here**

Nearby **streets were shut down in anticipation** of the event, some local residents were forced to temporarily evacuate their homes and community members gathered to line the sidewalks near the stadium to watch (and hear) the spectacle.

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"We're long-time Corvallis residents," Tracy Lengwin said. "(The implosion) is part of our town, our history and our community."

Structures within 500 feet of the stadium's west side were unoccupied, while occupants of buildings within 1,000 feet of the stadium were asked to remain indoors and away from windows and patios.

The implosion was quick, and went as planned, according to OSU, Dykon Blasting Corp. and Hoffman Construction representatives, who were onsite.

The blast heard around the mid-valley

"The blast went off very well," Hoffman Construction superintendent Mark Rado said. "We're very happy with how it ended up."

Steve Hatch of Dykon Blasting echoed Rado's sentiments. Hatch, who has been a part of numerous implosion projects, said everything went off without a hitch. Around 200 pounds of explosives were used. Hatch said the structure fell right where it was supposed to.

"Everything literally went exactly, 100% how we thought it was going to," he said.

He added that the rainy weather was actually beneficial because it limited the amount of dust from the concrete. On the flip side, the low cloud cover made the air blast and sound wave carry further.

In the comment section of a Corvallis Gazette-Times Facebook post, nearby community members shared where they were when heard the boom.

"We were watching the livestream (in Philomath) online and then heard the blast a full 5-10 seconds afterwards — fairly decent excitement for small town life!" Michael Lusardi commented.

Others said they heard the implosion as far away as Albany and east of Tangent near I-5 and even Lebanon.

There was excitement in the early morning air as the west side seating fell to the ground. The OSU athletic department looked forward to the morning's demolition with great anticipation.

"Great day to be a Beaver for sure," Scott Barnes, OSU vice president and director of athletics, said. "And a seminal moment for our university and for our athletics."

It was Barnes' duty to push one of two detonation buttons setting off the implosion.

The project

The **implosion of the west side of the stadium** marked the beginning of the end to an expansion and remodeling project, which kicked off in 2005. The "Completing Reser Stadium" project includes adding a welcome center and wellness facilities.

The stadium project is being funded by philanthropy, primarily led by the OSU Foundation, including a \$50 million gift from an anonymous donor. Premium seating and game day revenues will also help pay for the renovations.

Revenues from enrollment growth are earmarked for the welcome center, while a variety of revenue sources will fund the wellness center.

Milestones in the project so far include:

- In 2005, the east side of the stadium was completely redone.
- The south end zone was upgraded in between the 2006 and 2007 seasons.
- The north end zone/Valley Football Center/locker room complex was upgraded in 2016.

Next up is replacing the west side grandstand and press box, along with the additions of the wellness center and welcome center.

The initial cost of construction is estimated at \$153 million. It will be paid for through more than \$85 million in gifts, \$40 million in state bonds and \$28 million in OSU revenue bonds. A previous Corvallis Gazette-Times report in May showed the stadium project ultimately will cost around \$325 million over a 50-year span with interest.

Construction will continue until the summer of 2023. The stadium will not have a west side during the 2022 home season.

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