

South Sound historical markers get a facelift from DAR

One hundred years ago, the local chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution placed 11 markers from Puget Sound to the Columbia River to commemorate the pioneers who settled the region in the mid-1800s.

Now, the Sacajawea chapter is undertaking a mission to restore the markers that designate stopping points along the Oregon Trail. Some of the markers have become unreadable because of a century of age and weather.

A marker at Falls Terrace in Tumwater was restored in July, and a marker in Toledo in Lewis County was restored this month.

The next two projects are Friday (Sept. 2) in Tenino and Bush Prairie in Thurston County.

The first marker was installed in 1913 in what is now Sylvester Park in Olympia, and the rest were put in place in 1916, said Chuck Hornbuckle, whose wife, Suzanne, was active in DAR events. Suzanne died last year, but Chuck continues to support the DAR activities that were so important to her.

“We were very involved in heritage activities,” he said. They were also members of the Tumwater Historical Association.

The Tenino marker is at 420 Old Highway 99, a half-mile north of state Route 507. It’s on the east side of the road, about 100 feet from the Scatter Creek Bridge, across from the Tenino Elementary School. That restoration work is set for 8 a.m. Friday.

The Bush Prairie marker is at 8820 Old Highway 99, in front of CH20 Inc. It’s a little south of the stoplight at 99 and 83rd Avenue, on the east side of the road. Workers expect to get started there about 10 a.m.

Employees at CH20 will provide supplies for the Highway 99 restoration, according to DAR member Diane Smith, who said the restoration will conform with all hazardous chemical laws.

The process takes about two hours, Hornbuckle said.

“First of all, we ask that a local agency pressure wash it. After it’s dry, DAR comes in and there’s a solution to clean it. Then after that’s applied, we use a light sandpaper block to go over the raised letters and raised board to get rid of 100 years of weathering.” The

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A 100-year old Oregon Trail marker was restored in July by the Daughters of the American Revolution. This one is by Falls Terrace Restaurant at the corner of Custer Way SW and Deschutes Parkway SW. Several more are due for a facelift in coming weeks. **Jerre**

marker is washed again and left to dry, then the background is dyed to enhance contrast. Finally, a protective coat is applied to help prevent weathering.

Shirley Stirling is regent of the 90-member Sacajawea chapter, whose members range in age from 18 to more than 90. In addition to Oregon Trail markers, the DAR has installed historical markers over the years that commemorate war heroes, Lewis and Clark and the first school in an area.

“It varies according to what people of that era felt was important,” Stirling said.