Boardman

Boardman, located on the Columbia River in northeastern Oregon, is named for Samuel Boardman, the state's first full-time superintendent of state parks. Boardman homesteaded the land in 1903, and he planted trees in the area along the highway. Eventually, that practice became the policy of the Oregon Highway Commission and helped lay the groundwork for Oregon's park system.

The first permanent settler in Boardman was C.G. Blayden, who settled there in 1915. The town was laid out in 1916, a year after the articles of incorporation were drafted, and was incorporated in 1927.

Boardman was moved twice after it was originally built: first in 1952, when it was moved a half mile to accommodate U.S. Highway 30, and again in 1965 with the construction of the John Day Dam. The reservoir behind the dam was created in 1968, which required moving the town a quarter of a mile.

In 1964, the Boeing Company established a test site for rockets in Boardman, partly because of the work of Senator Mark O. Hatfield, who had lobbied for Boardman to become a NASA Control Center. Boeing helped develop Boardman, investing in irrigation projects to support area farms. Agriculture continues to be an important industry in Boardman.

Nature preserves, such as the Boardman Grasslands, are located close to Boardman, and there is a large U.S. Navy bombing range nearby, though only a few individuals are staffed there. The U.S. Army Umatilla Chemical Depot, located about eighteen miles east of Boardman, houses 12 percent of the U.S. chemical weapons supply. The chemical weapons stocks are being destroyed, and the facility is scheduled to be decommissioned.

In 2000, 2,855 people lived in Boardman.

Written by Zeb Larson

Further Reading:

Cox, Thomas R. *The Park Builders: A History of State Parks in the Pacific Northwest*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988.

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