

Rock Removal on Rezanof Keeps Road Safe

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An aerial view of the rock slide area between Piers II and III on Rezanof Drive.

Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

Folks driving on Rezanof between Piers II and III may have noticed some work being done on the Pillar Mountain hillside lining the road. Rick Ryser is the owner of Golden Alaska Excavating, the company that was contracted by the State Department of Transportation to remove a portion of the ever-growing rock slide and clear up space behind the retaining wall along the road.

Ryser said rocks have been falling down that hillside for the past 40 years, and built up behind the rock wall to the point where it had become a safety hazard for drivers.

“The last two to three years they were actually going out on the road and a car actually got crushed from one of them.”

He said there are dimples in the road where rocks have fallen, and the state determined the area needed to be dealt with for safety concerns. Ryser said the city also played a roll in the decision to extract the gravel because rocks were getting in the way of Pier III work.

“One of the main things is that we don’t want anyone to get hurt and the other thing

is they were having a hard time deciding and having to engineer the Pier III project because the rocks were coming across the hill.”

Ryser said the city did a study on the hillside and determined that work could be done to remove rocks and prevent further slides, but Golden Alaska is being contracted through the state DOT to do the actual extraction.

He said they’ve handled a pretty big chunk of the problem already, simply by hauling out material and using some to build up on the sides of the area.

“You know now the rocks are just landing down in the road that we build behind the gambions. And there’s two terraces – there’s a terrace halfway up the hill and the rocks hit that and slow down and then they have another catch basin in the bottom.”

He said work will continue for the next month or so, and people should expect minor traffic delays as rocks are hauled out of the area.

“Half the hill will hopefully disappear in about a month.”

Ryser expects work to be done in early August and a lot of the extracted rocks will go out to the airport. As a lifelong Kodiak resident, Ryser said he’s happy to help make the roadway a safer place to drive, and is actually doing the extraction work for free.