

Way to Go

TRAFFIC METERING HELPS

Traffic metering devices are being used on I-15 through the heart of Las Vegas by the Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada's Freeway and Arterial System of Transportation (FAST) with assistance from NDOT. The ramp meters control the frequency and spacing of merging vehicles to minimize freeway speed disruptions and improve traffic flow.

"I drive from St. Rose (Parkway) to Craig (Road) every day, and they're great," wrote southern Nevadan Susan Breckon. "I've noticed a significant difference in traffic flow."

FREEWAY SERVICE PATROL THANKS

NDOT Freeway Service Patrol Operator **Chuck Gianni** recently helped motorist Laura Robertson after her vehicle tire exploded. After being shaken up by the tire blowout, Laura reported that the Freeway Service Patrol operator was there right away to assist and check back again to make sure that her auto service club arrived to repair and tow the vehicle.

"It is great to know that NDOT is out there to help," wrote the thankful motorist. "This is a very valuable service to the community."

A SHOWER OF PRAISE

NDOT's new "Ice and Snow- Take it Slow" campaign offers important winter driving safety tips. Recently, **NDOT maintenance operations staff** provided winter driving safety brochures and ice scrapers to high school driver's education classes throughout northern Nevada.

"Thank you for the ice scrapers," wrote Betty Fobes of the Elko County School District. "What a positive message for all of us!"

SUCCESS OVER PEQUOP SUMMIT

Next year, **NDOT District 3** will continue an improvement project on nearly twenty miles of I-80 over Pequop Summit northwest of Elko. The project had a successful start over last summer's construction season, and was complimented by drivers such as Scott Shaptuck.

The commercial truck driver called to say that the project is one of the most well-managed he has driven through, with outstanding traffic flaggers and top-notch communication with the driving public.

CONES FOR BIKES

NDOT District 2 recently loaned the Department of Public Safety's Office of Traffic Safety 100 cones to block off a motorcycle training area for the Nevada Rider Motorcycle Safety Program.

"Without these cones, we would have been forced to cancel a motorcycle class," wrote Motorcycle Program Administrator Ken Kiphart. "Instead, thanks to your help, 12 new riders were trained that weekend."

THE MAP TO SUCCESS

NDOT Cartography regularly puts themselves on the map with detailed freeway, topographical and other maps that help guide Nevada transportation and commerce. The group recently received a thank you for a Tonopah-area map that was provided to Nye County officials.

"Everyone in the office, from the chief deputy assessor down, was admiring it," wrote the Nye County Assessor's office. "It will be a great help as the assessors do their appraisals."



Welcome

Christopher Davila, *Tonopah*

William Copper, *Tonopah*

Clifford Ray, *Carson City*

Thanks for Serving!

Steven Davis, *31 years, Carson City*

Michael Polish, *22 years, Carson City*

Condie Stevens, *30 years, Elko*



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Meg Ragonese
Public Information Officer
1263 South Stewart Street
Carson City, Nevada 89712
(775) 888-7172
mragonese@dot.state.nv.us

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Susan Martinovich, P.E.
Director
www.nevadadot.com



Traffic moves smoothly along the newly-improved U.S. 95 near Valley View and Decatur Boulevard.

CELEBRATING COMPLETION OF STATE'S LARGEST ROAD PROJECT

The completion of Nevada's largest state road project to date, the widening of U.S. 95 in northwest Las Vegas, was recently celebrated by transportation and government dignitaries.

Federal Highway Administrator Rick Capka and Governor Jim Gibbons joined NDOT Director Susan Martinovich, Las Vegas Mayor Oscar Goodman and Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada General Manager Jacob Snow in a recent celebration event.

"Nevada is moving forward, and you can tell from the U.S. 95 project that we are moving forward in a smart manner," Governor Gibbons said.

The recently-completed project improved approximately eight miles of U.S. 95, expanding the freeway from six to 10 lanes from Martin Luther King Boulevard to Rainbow Boulevard, and from four to six lanes from Rainbow Boulevard to Craig Road. Seven new underpasses and redesigned I-15 connector ramps were also part of the project. Additional improvements include ramp metering, high mast lighting, flood control/drainage additions, and soundwalls.

The improvements started in 2000 and were separated into 10 projects. The more than \$500 million in total improvements were funded by federal and state dollars, and comprise the largest monetary road project ever completed by the Department.

"The key to the project's success was NDOT Project Manager John Terry, Resident Engineers Tim Ruguleiski, K.D. Warach and Jeff Shapiro, and crews 916 and 926," Martinovich explained.

The project also marks the state's first use of high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes to improve traffic flow and incident response. By allowing only vehicles with two or more passengers, as well as buses and motorcycles, HOV lanes can help mitigate ever-increasing traffic by encouraging carpooling. Ramp meters will also be used to control the frequency and the spacing of merging vehicles to minimize freeway speed disruptions and improve traffic flow. The busy section of freeway sees over 200,000 vehicles every day, and is predicted to see over 300,000 vehicles in 2020.

To speed the vital project, NDOT saved time with streamlined appraisal and acquisition methods. Consultants augmented NDOT staff in the right-of-way process. Another key in expediting the project was the acceleration of Rainbow Boulevard interchange and bridge construction.

NDOT will continue transportation improvements on the important and ever-growing U.S. 95 corridor with upcoming restriping of the freeway to six lanes between Craig Road and Centennial Parkway, and planned future widening from Washington Avenue to Kyle Canyon Road.

NEVADA BRIDGES AGAIN RANKED NATION'S BEST



The bridges of the Henderson "Spaghetti Bowl" interchange, seen above, are a fine example of top-rated Nevada bridges.

The Nevada Department of Transportation's aggressive bridge program has once again helped lead Nevada bridges to be named the nation's best.

A recent Better Roads magazine survey shows only four percent of Nevada's 1,810 state, county and city bridges being functionally obsolete or structurally deficient, compared to a national average of 24 percent. Arizona came in second with the only other single-digit rating at six percent. Compiled from statistics provided by state engineers, the recent survey ranks bridge condition through October 2007.

Using Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) classifications, the survey defines functionally obsolete bridges as deficient in carrying capacity, clearance or alignment with the roadway. Structurally deficient bridges are defined as those that are substandard in carrying capacity or require immediate rehabilitation. The classifications do not mean the bridge is in danger of collapse.

"This is great news for Nevada motorists, visitors, and the commerce that relies on our roadways and bridges," NDOT Director Susan Martinovich said. "The dedication and expertise of the NDOT team members and others working on our state bridges will continue to lead our aggressive bridge inspection

and maintenance program, and ensure the safety of our bridges."

NDOT inspects all public bridges in the state, including city and county-maintained structures. Every two years, NDOT performs an in-depth inspection of each bridge, while bridges requiring maintenance are inspected more frequently. All NDOT and consultant bridge inspectors are trained to federal standards and thoroughly review all elements of each bridge to evaluate condition, taking hundreds of precision measurements to evaluate complex bridge structures. Minor bridge repairs are often performed immediately during bridge inspection to avoid any delays that could allow deterioration to worsen.

The national bridge survey ranked transportation funding as a major concern among many bridge engineers. To preserve Nevada's public bridges in good condition within available funding, the Nevada Department of Transportation prioritizes any necessary bridge repairs by first replacing or rehabilitating structurally deficient bridges, and then functionally obsolete bridges, before they become hazardous or burdensome to users.

Nevada bridges were also ranked the nation's best in the 2006 Better Roads survey.

ALLEVIATING TRANSPORTATION BLUES ON BLUE DIAMOND ROAD



NDOT Director Susan Martinovich (pictured center in black) and other transportation and government officials recently broke ground on Blue Diamond improvements during a ground breaking ceremony. The improvements will eliminate such congestion points as traffic stops from the railroad crossings seen in the background of this photo.

The Nevada Department of Transportation is improving a major southern Las Vegas thoroughfare with the widening of State Route 160.

Also known as Blue Diamond Road, the thoroughfare carries an ever-growing amount of commuter and commercial traffic between Las Vegas and the expanding bedroom community of Pahrump.

Currently, the thoroughfare is eight lanes from I-15 to Decatur Boulevard before narrowing to two lanes. The project will improve the important transportation corridor by widening two miles of Blue Diamond Road from two to eight lanes between Decatur and Rainbow Boulevard. A new cast-in-place single span bridge will also be built to carry vehicles over a railroad crossing that currently can back up traffic when trains pass by. In addition, a new alignment will feed Jones Boulevard into Blue Diamond Road south of the current intersection for improved safety and travel, while a new traffic signal will make merging safer at the intersection.

"There are a number of accidents now at Jones," NDOT Resident Engineer Mario Gomez explained. "Traffic gets frustrated while trying to merge from Jones onto Blue Diamond, and many people pull into oncoming traffic."

Other project improvements include landscaping and aesthetic enhancements, as well as an improved traffic signal at Rainbow Boulevard.

The approximately \$52 million improvement project, being constructed by project contractor Road and Highway Builders, will enhance travel and safety on the busy stretch of road that sees over 25,000 vehicles daily, up from over 10,000 vehicles in 1997. To ease travel during certain phases of construction, a new two-lane detour will allow traffic to bypass the construction zone just south of the existing road.

The project, phase 2B of NDOT's overall Blue Diamond widening project, is expected to complete in 2009. The 2007 Nevada Legislature also set aside funding for future widening of State Route 160 west of Rainbow Boulevard.

RINGING IN THE NEW YEAR

As they do every year, NDOT maintenance forces played a large part in successful New Year's Eve celebrations.

Over 100 dedicated NDOT District 1 maintenance personnel worked through New Year's Eve night to assist in road closures and street sweeping along the Las Vegas Strip and Interstate 15. From the temporary stoppage of escalators on the Tropicana Boulevard pedestrian bridges over the Strip to ramp closures and programmable message signs on I-15, no detail was left unattended to ensure the safety of the estimated 300,000 revelers who came to the city to ring in 2008.

In District 2, maintenance professionals also helped ensure a safe New Year's Eve by providing traffic control devices for Lake Tahoe road closures. The crews also sweep streets after festivities. The annual celebration attracts approximately 65,000 people to the casino town of South Lake Tahoe.



SAFETY SIGNS

Hard hats have a life, but it's only five years. Is it time to retire your hard hat?