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NDOT NEWS

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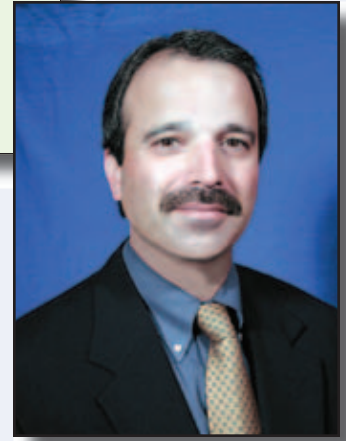
Las Vegas Traffic Management Center



Bringing Agencies & Technology Together

The Road Ahead

By Jeff Fontaine, P.E., Director



Heavy snow and rain throughout Nevada the past couple of months created a few serious situations for motorists. Floods took out miles of roadway on a two lane state route in southeastern Nevada and motorists were stranded for a brief time when drifts made it impossible to drive through Washoe Valley between Reno and Carson City. At Mt. Charleston, outside of Las Vegas, it took two rotary plows to keep the roadway clear during a very heavy snowfall.

Through it all, an excellent effort was put forth by hundreds of hard working NDOT employees who worked long shifts without a day off, sometimes for weeks. Their labors in difficult and dangerous conditions made it possible for the traveling public to go about their business with only short delays.

As an example, in just NDOT's western district, employees worked 12-hour shifts to operate 117 snowplows and five motor graders. The round-the-clock work made all the difference in being able to keep up with the elements.



Snow buried a new rest area at the Mt. Rose Summit above Lake Tahoe, but NDOT maintenance crews worked around the clock to make access to the lake possible during inclement weather.

is becoming easier for companies who need overdimensional permits and contractors who need questions answered during a contract's advertising period. Information is now available on line that formerly was only accessible by mail.

Innovation is also the key to NDOT's efforts to stop graffiti vandals in Las Vegas. Graffiti is a growing problem, and the department devotes a crew to paint out markings, pick up trash and help with landscaping. A Las Vegas

employee is also fabricating graffiti guards to keep vandals from reaching overhead signs.

Dedicated, innovative and industrious, NDOT employees demonstrate an exemplary sense of commitment and public service that we can all be proud of.

On The Cover: Completion of the new high-tech Freeway and Arterial System of Traffic (FAST) facility in Las Vegas will aid traffic operation of interstates and arterials. The heart of the project is a 4,000-square-foot control center with 20 workstations and 56 live feed cameras throughout the valley.

FAST Center to Guide Intelligent Transportation Systems

Monitoring and responding to the flow of vehicles on interstates and arterials will be made easier with completion of a new high-tech facility in Las Vegas. Named FAST for the Freeway and Arterial System of Transportation, the new center will bring together the Department of Public Safety's Nevada Highway Patrol, the Intelligent Transportation System for southern Nevada and a new maintenance facility for NDOT.

The \$15 million project is situated on 20 acres of land near the corner of Decatur Boulevard and the I-215 Beltway. FAST will be operated by the Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada under an agreement with NDOT.

The heart of the project is the facility's 4,000-square-foot control center with 20 workstations, 10 of them for FAST, and the other 10 for the patrol. There is also a bank of large monitors connected to more than 100 live feed cameras throughout the valley. A video wall, consisting of 36 large rear projection screens allows instant traffic monitoring.

The patrol will relocate its Southern Command and administrative offices from an antiquated facility on East Sahara Boulevard. About 240 employees will work at the

“We’re looking forward to the partnership with FAST,” NHP Captain Chris Perry said. “This is of particular benefit to the highway patrol to get to and mitigate problems on our freeways. It will greatly improve our ability to respond quickly.”

command center, which will be staffed around the clock.

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improve our ability to respond quickly.”

In response to traffic situations, the FAST Center has several tools to improve traffic, including a new ramp metering system for freeways and the network of Dynamic Message System (DMS) signs. The 12 DMS



ON DISPLAY—Traffic technician Jim Neubert works the console at the current Traffic Management Center on Eighth Street in Las Vegas. The new facility on Decatur Boulevard will house the Nevada Highway Patrol Southern Command, the Regional Transportation Commission's Traffic Management Center, and maintenance crews for the Nevada Department of Transportation.

signs are an early warning system to the public to alert drivers to slow down because of an accident, or alter their route because of a closed off-ramp.

FAST will also manage the coordination of local traffic signals in Clark County, Las Vegas, North Las Vegas and Henderson. About 266 county signals are currently on the FAST system, but 301 signals can be integrated in the future. At the new facility, traffic will be monitored 18 hours a day, seven days a week.

The actual buildings themselves are a 56,000-square-foot office building and a 10,500-square-foot warehouse and maintenance facility. In about a year, another facility will be built that will house six NDOT maintenance crews along with a repair shop and stock room.

Henderson I-515 Beltway Interchange Will Provide Benefits for Commuters

Motorists are starting to receive the benefits of the I-515 Beltway Interchange in Henderson with construction of the I-515 north to I-215 west ramp to open about the same time this edition of NDOT News



FUTURE FLYOVERS—Las Vegas area commuters can expect smooth sailing when the I-515 Beltway project is completed. Three aspects of the construction are shown: I-215 east to the I-515 north ramp is on top, the north to west approach from I-515 to I-215 is in the middle, and I-515 north and southbound is at ground level.

sees print. When all ramps and flyovers are complete, in about a year, commuters will be able to use the Beltway Interchange to travel seamlessly between the I-215 and the I-515.

The entire 53-mile Las Vegas Beltway will become a full-fledged, limited access freeway. One major milestone will be the opening of the Beltway Interchange in Henderson, scheduled for 2006

Already, those traveling in the vicinity are able to visualize what the completed project will look like. The I-215 bridge over Gibson Road is taking shape and bridge expansions on I-515 are also in progress. Throughout construction, NDOT and the contractor, Washington Group International Inc., have been dedicated to minimizing the delays from

construction. Construction is being done at night to avoid delays during commute hours and two traffic lanes in each direction are always open during the day.

The current bike path detour allows cyclists and pedestrians to travel from Las Palmas Entrada Avenue to Fiesta Henderson Boulevard. The final segment will connect the bike path at Gibson Road to Acacia Park.

Drivers have several ways to find out about the project and how it will impact their commute:

- The website dedicated to the interchange is www.215515project.com. The website has access to web cameras.
- Radio broadcasts at 1610 AM.
- Roadside message boards.
- An office at Henderson City Hall, phone (702) 267-3228.
- Monthly tours, usually held on the third Wednesday of each month. For information, contact the public outreach hotline 267-3228.

The \$82.2 million project is immense.

Washington Group is erecting a 2,500-foot-long, 60-foot-tall steel bridge over two other new bridge structures, all the while maintaining a traffic flow of over 115,000 vehicles per day underneath.



MAKING PROGRESS—The falsework on the ramp from north I-515 to West I-215 indicates the progress being made. At far right is more falsework that is part of bridge widening over I-515.

Graffiti Guards Deter Vandals

Whether it's a bridge, overhead sign or soundwall, just about anything large and visible can be a target of graffiti vandals in Las Vegas.

Although it is a frustrating job that never ends, NDOT is using crews devoted to cleaning up graffiti and an innovative approach to prevent spray painters.



GUARD IS UP—A graffiti guard placed on US-95 in Las Vegas has proven to be a deterrent. Several more will be placed along freeways in the area.

Welder Keith Wroblewski is creating graffiti guards from sheet metal to be attached to metal poles that support overhead signs. Wroblewski even made a machine that bends collars out of steel to fit the diameter of support poles. Using scrap pieces of metal, the bending device was finished in a day.

One guard has been installed on US-95 near Valley View Boulevard, and five more have been fabricated to be installed to protect signs on the airport connector, SR-171.

“We haven’t had any more graffiti on the Valley View sign since the guard was installed,” Corey Parsons of Crew 214 said.

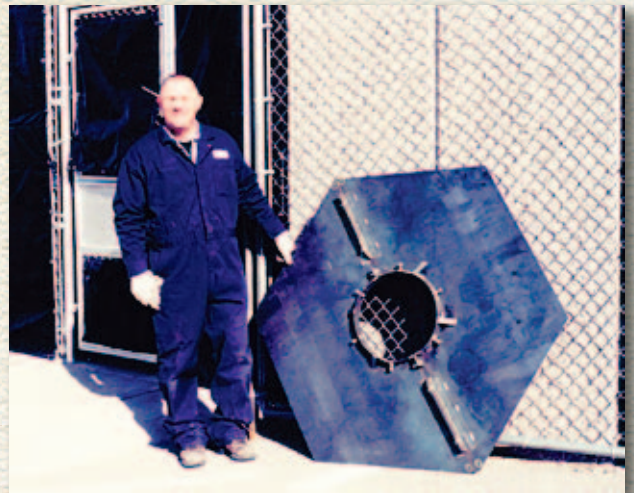
Wroblewski creates the guards out of 16-gauge sheet metal that is too stiff to easily climb over, yet is too flexible to provide support for standing. “I’ve tried to minimize any possibility that anyone can grab hold of the guard and pull himself up,” he said.



FABRICATING—Welder Keith Wroblewski creates a graffiti guard at the NDOT welding shop in Las Vegas. He also built a machine out of scrap pieces that bends steel to create the guard's collar.

In addition to presenting a physical barrier to taggers, “I think there is a psychological value that may cause a deterrent. They may go on to a different target,” Wroblewski said.

Repairing damaged overhead signs is expensive. A few hundred dollars spent in prevention can potentially save thousands in repairs.



FINISHED PRODUCT—Wroblewski is on the front line protecting overhead signs from taggers with his graffiti guard. NDOT's efforts also include a full-time crew charged with erasing graffiti, trash removal and landscaping.

“When we clean paint from a highway sign, we take away some of the reflectivity. After two or three taggings we may have to replace it,” Wroblewski said. “That means we have to take a lane at night and have a crew with boom trucks do the removal.”

NDOT has more than one weapon in its arsenal against graffiti. Various companies are creating more coatings and cleaners to make graffiti easier to remove. One maintenance crew in Las Vegas is devoted to graffiti removal, trash pickup and landscaping.

Wroblewski, who joined NDOT in 1999, is a good example of an employee who brings enthusiasm and innovation to his job.

“I really enjoy doing this and the atmosphere of NDOT. It never gets to the point that it’s boring or I’m tired of it. There’s variety because I don’t just work in the welding shop, I go out and do field work.”

The graffiti guard fabricator became a maintenance worker at NDOT after a 20-year career as a carpenter in Las Vegas.

Carson City Freeway Moves Ahead



When the entire Carson City freeway is completed in a few years, residents and motorists passing through will be amazed how quickly the capital city can be traversed from north to south.

The first phase will be completed late next year, providing a rapid route between US-50 and the northern end of the project.

Public input is currently being sought on the design of phase two, which will extend from US-50 to the junction leading to Lake Tahoe. The project includes completion of the interchange at US-50 East, an interchange at Fairview Drive, crossings at



BLADE IT FLAT—Fine grading is done on the embankment south of the Arrowhead Drive Bridge structure, part of the Carson City Freeway project.

Fifth Street, Koontz Lane, Clearview Drive, Snyder Avenue, a single point urban interchange at the Carson Street/U.S. 50-Lake Tahoe Junction, on-site and off-site drainage, soundwalls and the extension of the Linear Ditch Park multi-use path.

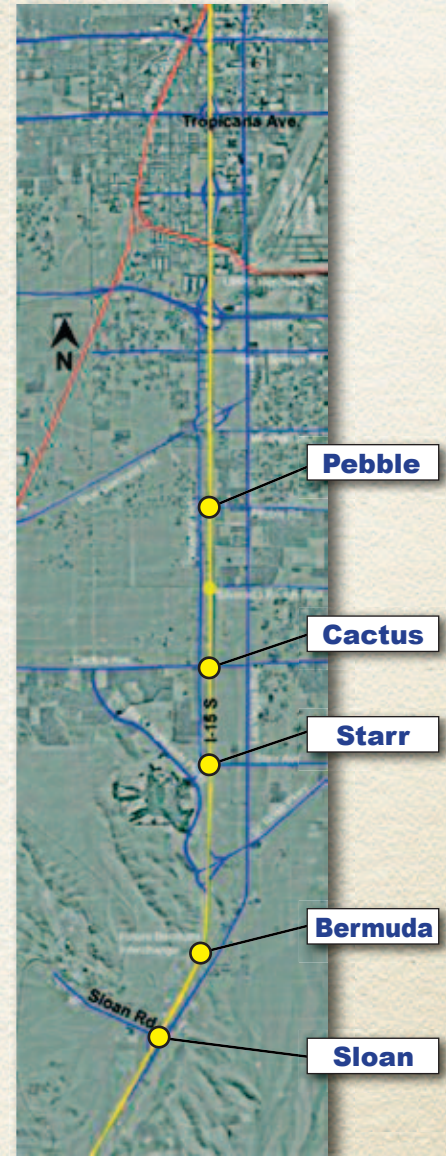
Freeway design, drainage, soundwall locations, landscape treatments, multi-use paths and pedestrian accommodations will be discussed at public meetings. Check the Nevada DOT website under “Public Involvement” and then click on “Meetings and Hearings.” Information on the entire freeway project is available at ccfreeway.com”.

I-15 Corridor Study Plans for Continued Growth in Las Vegas

The constant growth in the southern Las Vegas Valley is being planned for in a 12-mile corridor study from Tropicana Boulevard to Sloan Road. Parsons Transportation Group is conducting the \$3 million corridor study and National Environmental Policy Act evaluation.

Plans include evaluation of a 14-lane corridor: five freeway lanes in each direction and two collector and distribution lanes protected by a traffic barrier from Tropicana to the Beltway Interchange. From there to Sloan it will be 10 lanes.

Five new interchanges are being considered at Sloan Road, Bermuda Road, Starr Avenue, Cactus Avenue and Pebble Road. The interchanges would be built in cooperation with the Southern Nevada Regional Transportation Commission, the City of Henderson and Clark County. In addition, Las Vegas Boulevard will provide additional traffic relief. If the proposed Ivanpah Airport is built south of Sloan, it is expected to generate 80,000 vehicle trips per day between the airport and Las Vegas by 2030.



Freeway Project Taking Shape Between Reno and Carson City

The I-580 Freeway Extension Project marks the final segment in NDOT's plan to construct a freeway from Carson City in the south through the Reno-Sparks area to the north.

NDOT has been planning for several decades to improve I-580 to freeway standards for its entire length in Nevada. Piece by piece, the long-range plan is taking shape. This new freeway segment covers 8.5 miles from the Mt. Rose Highway to the Bowers Mansion cutoff, completing the freeway in southern Washoe County.

The existing highway is strained because of increased commuter traffic and development in south Truckee Meadows, Pleasant Valley and north Washoe

- Select a bridge type for Galena Creek that complements the freeway corridor and is visually pleasing both to the traveling public and from vantage points in Pleasant Valley and other outlying areas.
- Incorporate maintenance and operational requirements into the initial design, specifically addressing snow removal, bridge and roadway deicing, drainage facilities, and incident management.

The project should be completed and open to traffic in 2009.



I-580—Some of the falsework is in place for the grade separation at the south end of the I-580 project above Pleasant Valley. This structure will bridge Parker Ranch Road, formerly Corey Canyon Way.



TYING STEEL—Employees of Edward Kraemer and Sons, Inc. tie steel rods together for a bridge pier at Galena Creek.

Valley. Anticipated growth will burden the route even further with continuing negative impacts on congestion and traffic safety. The freeway extension will provide a safer and more efficient route to serve growing traffic needs.

The project was directed to meet these challenges:

- Develop a design that blends with the terrain, minimizes impacts, and is aesthetically pleasing.
- Create an alignment for the new freeway facility that balances earthwork, addresses geotechnical challenges, reduces visual and noise impacts, meets freeway standards, and avoids significant impacts to wildlife and vegetation.



ABUTMENT—A graceful concrete and steel arch will spring from the footing at the bottom right of this photo. The larger structure is the southern abutment for the Galena Bridge.

State Still Digging Out From Record Snow and Flooding

Bright spring days and warmer temperatures may have overtaken the pounding snowstorms and rain that buffeted the entire state in late December and early January, but there are places where the Nevada Department of Transportation is still digging out. And compliments are still coming in from grateful citizens who appreciate the work done by NDOT employees.



POGONIP—Frozen fog, or pogonip, is a rarity, but it became the meteorological occurrence of the day between storms in northern Nevada in January.

Round-the-clock snowplowing in the mountainous areas of western Nevada is nothing new for NDOT drivers, but the storms this year were something else. Back-to-back storms dropped six feet of snow in the Reno area, with much more in the higher elevations. Schools in Reno were closed for five days as snow covered the area.

Ron Millim, a crew supervisor and driver who

covers US-395 near Carson City, saw something in early January he hadn't seen in 27 years with NDOT: 40 southbound cars stopped by drifting snow in Washoe Valley. Drifts were

caused by 50 mph winds blowing the snow horizontally. "It was probably the most snow I've seen all at one time. There were about 10 vehicles we had to pull out in the northbound lanes, and then we turned around and headed southbound.

"We cut a hole with a snowplow, and then we pulled out or pushed out the cars, and then we escorted them out. Our crew did a good job."

Northern Nevada storms were just that: storms that affected the entire northern half of the state. Chain or snow tires were required throughout the California and Nevada sides of the Sierra, as well as I-80 in the Elko area and on US-50 in the Austin and Ely areas.

In the Lake Tahoe area, plow operators worked 12-14 hour shifts for two weeks or more without a day off. "The crews did a great job dealing with poor visibility and long hours behind the wheel," said crew supervisor Larry Hough. "The crews were the ones to make it happen. Without a good crew I'd be lost."

Central and northern Nevada also saw crews putting in 12-hour shifts for days in a row. Near Emigrant Pass on



PUSH IT BACK—Clearing a lane is the first objective when record snow falls, and when the sun comes out there's time to plow the shoulders.

I-80 there was a 10-vehicle chain reaction accident on Jan. 18 that included semi trucks. The accident closed the highway for several hours.

WASHOUT—The high bank at the center of this photo shows where SR-317 existed south of Caliente before a large section was lost by flooding in the Meadow Valley Wash. Frehner Construction is rebuilding the roadway under an emergency contract.



Heavy rains took a toll in southern Nevada when high water took out a big section of SR-317 south of Caliente. In Mesquite, Virgin River flooding damaged a bridge pier and piers were undermined on a bridge on SR-170.

An avalanche struck a ski resort on Mt. Charleston outside of Las Vegas, and NDOT crews worked to keep up with heavy snowfall. “After the avalanche the Forest

Storms Pack a Punch in Southern Nevada; Roads Wash Out, Snow Blankets Mountains

Service closed up the mountain for a week, which gave us a chance to get blowers out and opened up the lanes to normal width,” supervisor Roy Neal said.

Much of Overton was submerged in water in January when the Muddy River overflowed its banks, which forced the evacuation of about 100 residents.

In Las Vegas, rain-caused flooding closed roads including a few south of the Las Vegas Beltway that had to remain closed a day or more. Rail service was disrupted in Las Vegas because of flooding that damaged tracks and bridges in Nevada and California.

Perhaps the most serious damage occurred when water washed over the tracks in Rainbow Canyon about 100 miles north of Las Vegas, and more than a dozen rail cars derailed when water undermined the tracks.



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UP TO THE HUBS--NDOT loader operator Oscar Henderson tries to clear debris from the roadway on Moapa Valley Boulevard south of Overton during the first week of January.-Photo courtesy Vernon Robison, Moapa Valley Progress

Cooperation Brings Benefits to Rural Highway

Winter flooding took out more than half of the 21 miles of SR-317 between Caliente and Elgin in southeastern Nevada, but a strong cooperative effort among NDOT, the contractor and Union Pacific Railroad has the road back in business. The first 10 miles of road south of Caliente have been repaired under an emergency contract.

The railroad is the biggest user of the state route because it provides access to the rail line that runs through Rainbow Canyon. The railroad itself lost a large section of track and had cars derail.

When train crews have worked 12 hours they are required to stop for replacements wherever they are located, and SR-317 provided access for crew vans. Ranchers in the area also depend on the road, and when the big water hit, a few of the ranchers made it out in time, and others were stranded until the water subsided.

Michael Maylone, acting resident engineer on the project, said the repair project is going well, thanks to Frehner Construction's Clint Madsen. "He's been very cooperative and bent over backwards to give us our money's worth and a good road," Maylone said. Frehner was awarded an emergency contract of \$500,000 to repair the road.

Thanks also came Maylone's way: "He's been wonderful for us," said Joey Brackenberry of the 7 J Ranch. "Mike has helped us with our driveway twice and is very caring about the folks who live here. We only have the best to say about him."

Also impressive is the contribution by Union Pacific. "The railroad brought in some big riprap, 50 cars of it, and they're donating another 50 cars. Jerry Parker of Union Pacific has



ZZ NOT—Michael Maylone does a pretty good impression of guitarist Billy Gibbons of ZZ Top even when he's not trying. NDOT's man on the scene in the Caliente area has residents grateful for his work in replacing a road that was washed out by major flooding.



HEAVY LOAD—A Union Pacific locomotive hauls heavy freight through Rainbow Canyon near SR-317. Union Pacific has donated 100 freight cars of heavy riprap to put the state route back in working order.

been very helpful," Maylone said.

But the amount of cooperation does not stop there. The Bureau of Land Management and local ranchers have also donated material to make the road passable. Using local materials kept the price down, and more work could be done with the amount of money allotted.

NDOT crews are also part of the work, hauling materials and drainage pipe.

Rushing water tore away most of the roadbed, and left dangerous dropoffs for what remained. Donated riprap is being used to build up the travelway and stabilize the riverbank. The rebuilt road is up to standards, with two lanes and shoulders on both sides.

While SR-317 was a paved road, the new road is gravel, several inches deep. The gravel was given a seal coat and NDOT can follow up with a chip seal this summer. NDOT is currently evaluating more permanent improvements.

Maintainers Take On Difficult Tasks

While construction projects seem to attract the most attention, the day-to-day work of maintaining interstates and state routes is no less important.

Maintenance crews' responses to snow and flood brought in a number of compliments during the winter months. Besides operating plows, crews need to provide traffic control at accident sites, maintain signs and snow poles and remove debris. In many cases they are first on the scene at accidents and provide emergency assistance and summon ambulances.

As detailed in other articles in this edition of NDOT News, maintainers provided vital lifelines to residents by plowing snow around the clock in mountain areas and responding to flooded roadways, mudslides and avalanches.

Projects the crews tackle on a routine basis include highway striping, extending culverts and widening shoulders. The work on shoulders and culverts makes the roadway more forgiving, and helps prevent rollovers if a motorists drifts off the paved surface. Crews also repair guardrail and specialty crews maintain freeway lighting, install pavement markings and work on landscaping.



A LITTLE OFF THE TOP—Cracked asphalt is cut, jack hammered, dug up and removed from a bridge deck outside the Carlin Tunnels. Crews 350 and 355 from Elko do the work.



BIG SLIDE—This aerial photo shows hundreds of thousands of tons of rock and earth on top of SR-766 near Elko in early February. The slide has since been excavated and the road was scheduled to be re-opened.--Photo courtesy Ross Andreson, Elko Daily Free Press

in groups, and it took a half-hour to an hour for the detour. After we were able to establish the slide was stable, we ran a small detour through the toe of the slide and we had a two-lane gravel road.”

The slide also wiped out utility poles, and electric lines had to be replaced. Major water lines to Newmont were also affected.

On paper, SR-766 looks like the road to nowhere, dead-ending 17 miles north of Carlin. However, the road serves Newmont and Barrick Gold's open-pit mining operations and the road sees a daily average of 2,500 vehicles, mostly heavy trucks.

Slide Takes Out Route Near Elko

A massive landslide a couple of miles north of Carlin on SR-766 took out 1,300 feet of roadway in early February, but by the time this edition of NDOT News sees print the road should be back in operation.

A hill of waste rock from Newmont Mining Corp.'s operation gave way, and an estimated 900,000 tons of material swept across the two-lane road. In some places the material was 60 feet deep, Assistant District Engineer Mike Murphy said.

Newmont used its huge loaders and haul trucks to remove the rubble to between three and five feet deep. Smaller equipment took off the bottom layer of material.

“The first couple of weeks after the slide we used a haul road through the mine itself,” Murphy said. “The mine provided pilot cars and ran vehicles

in groups, and it took a half-hour to an hour for the detour. After we were able to establish the slide was stable, we ran a small detour through the toe of the slide and we had a two-lane gravel road.”

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NDOT Enters New Era of Customer Service

Truckers Process Their Own Permits On Line and Builders Have Questions and Answers Posted on Web

Obtaining information from NDOT is becoming easier and more efficient all the time, with contractors able to post questions and receive answers on line, and trucking companies able to access over-dimensional permits via computer.

Contractors, subcontractors and suppliers may pose questions during the contract advertising period for the specific contract.

Typically, when contractors have questions about a project, subcontractors want to know who won a bid, or someone wants to find all the projects on a certain highway, all one has to do is turn to the NDOT website. Going to the "Request for Information" page or "RFI" is as easy as making a few clicks with a mouse: "Doing Business With NDOT" leads to

"Contractor Information" and from there to "Contracts, Bids and Bulletins." After entering the contract number, the RFI page is available.

The site offers information that is helpful to suppliers who want details on the type and amount of materials that are specified.

Department staff has designed a handy computerized system that allows access a number of different ways: contract number, location within the state or the highway involved.

A contractor interested in bidding on a project may have questions because a section of the plans may seem

ambiguous or contradictory. Providing help to one bidder and not others would not be fair, so NDOT posts questions and answers for all to see. For a large project like the Carson City Freeway, 61 questions and answers are posted on the department's "request for information" web site under contract 3154.



INFO ON LINE—George Del Carlo of American Ready-Mix, Inc. in Reno is a supplier who uses NDOT's web site "Request for Information" page to obtain details of the types and amounts of materials to be used on a project. The main purpose of the RFI site is to field questions from contractors, subcontractors and suppliers during the contract advertising period.

Holidays and Weekends are No Problem for Shippers Who Process Their Own Permits Via Computer

It's a situation all too familiar for a trucking company that wants to move a crane late on a Friday for work early on Saturday. The problem is that the crane is longer than that permitted on a Nevada highway without an over-dimensional permit.

With NDOT offices closed on the weekends, a company could face delays before a permit is issued. Beginning in February, NDOT took the first steps toward trucking companies issuing their own permits. Companies can save time by filling in information on line and creating the paperwork instantly.

"Four companies have been certified so far to issue their own permits," NDOT Administrative Services Officer Dick Yeoman said. "We have programmed various restrictions that won't allow them to do something that shouldn't be done. Our permit agents will audit daily what permits have been issued, and we'll contact the trucking companies if there are any problems."

Yeoman said as the program grows, more companies will be added and the size of the loads being transported will be expanded. An over-dimensional permit is needed for vehicles that are longer, higher, wider or heavier than is normally allowed on highways.

Companies interested in joining the program can contact the Department of Transportation at 775-888-7410. Yeoman said it would take about two hours of training over the phone for a company representative to learn the process. The trucking

Continued on next page



companies will be required to use a credit card to pay for the online permits.

Yeoman said companies that request trip permits in person or by telephone can still rely on permit clerks providing same day service. He said the staff of four provides an average of 139 over-dimensional permits every working day.

JOB CHANGE AHEAD—Susan Peterson is one of four Overdimensional Permit clerks who provide same-day service for companies whose vehicles exceed height, weight, width or length limitations. The staff provides an average of 139 permits per day, but is not available to process permits nights, weekends or holidays. Now that more companies will process their own overdimensional permits, Peterson's job, and that of the other clerks, will move toward auditing the data entered by trucking companies.

Railway Project is Gaining Steam

The rebuilding of the Virginia and Truckee Railroad took another step to reality with work set to begin in mid-April to bring in an estimated 400,000 cubic yards of material to fill the Overman Pit and construct track across the pit to American Flat. Granite Construction qualified as lowest bidder for the work at \$3.79 million.

Money for the construction project comes from federal transportation funds, Carson City room taxes, Storey County sales taxes and fundraisers. There are many other sources of funds and donors, but one of the most important elements has been the host of never-say-die volunteers who haven't taken the ball and continue to run with it.

For those who do not know the story of the V&T Railroad, the original construction in 1870 created an economic boom by connecting the silver mines of Virginia City to the mills of Carson City.

V&T Chugging Ahead: A contract has been let to create a route for the V&T Railway across the Overman Pit below Gold Hill, and a steam locomotive has been purchased by the Nevada Commission for the Reconstruction of the V&T Railroad.

Now, more than 130 years later, fans of the V&T are bringing the famed short line back to life.

The rebuilding of the railway as

a regional tourist attraction was also given a boost last year when an NDOT railroad bridge in Las Vegas was transported north to carry trains across US-50. The bridge will be installed as part of a future project. Other recent progress includes obtaining rights-of-way for 10 miles of the route. Once construction begins, the project should take about two years.

A final design and acquisition of right-of-way is still needed where the railroad bridge will cross US-50.

Construction of the 17-mile route through parts of Storey, Lyon counties and Carson City is expected to cost about \$30 million.



ON TRACK--Lt. Gov. Lorraine Hunt and other dignitaries addressed a crowd of some 200 at the groundbreaking of the new V&T Railroad on April 6.

NDOT Responds to Residents' Calls For Improvements in Pleasant Valley

Changes Include Oversized Speed Limit Signs, Rumble Strips, Residents' Awareness Campaign

When two fatal car crashes occurred within 12 hours of each other between Reno and Carson City in August, area residents and commuters were faced with a closed road and several hours of waiting while emergency crews and crash investigators did their job.

During the weeks after the crashes, residents voiced concerns about the safety of the six-mile section of US-395 through Pleasant Valley. One of the main concerns was the need to improve safety along the four-lane



OVERSIZE IT—Oversized speed limit signs were installed in Pleasant Valley between Reno and Carson City as a response to citizen meetings with NDOT staff and other public officials.

highway with demands to install a center concrete divider to reduce the number of head-on collisions.

The first impression was that the highway was the problem, not the drivers. However, the cause of the two crashes (resulting in three fatalities) was drivers allegedly under the influence of drugs. A neighborhood citizens group was formed and approached the department for help. In response to the events that occurred and the concerns of residents, NDOT Director Jeff Fontaine called for staff recommendations to find innovative approaches to see if there were underlying engineering problems and how they could be solved.



HOME GROWN—A six-mile section of US-395 has blossomed with signs asking motorists to slow down. The grassroots effort seems to have had an effect in making drivers more aware of the speed limit.

Three steps were taken:

- An outside consultant with traffic safety experience was hired to hold meeting with area residents.
- A comprehensive corridor safety evaluation was made resulting in short and long-term recommendations.
- Immediate safety improvements were made.

Within a week of the accidents, “rumble strips” were installed in the medians. When driven on, the rumble strips vibrate the vehicle and alert the driver to the danger of crossing into oncoming traffic. Although not unique, these center lane rumble strips have been used only occasionally in Nevada.

Also, larger 50 mph speed limit signs were installed and the striping was improved along the highway. The citizens’ group and residents also showed their resolve, installing their own signs to slow traffic. As long as they do not imitate official road signs and are on private property they do not violate laws regarding traffic signs.

On Sept. 25, public employees, including emergency services personnel, technical staff from NDOT, representatives from the Nevada Highway Patrol and the Washoe County Regional Transportation Commission, made themselves available for a three-hour community workshop. The residents were encouraged

to express concerns and propose solutions to the issues they were seeing on a daily basis. There were question-and-answer sessions, presentations and interviews.

A second community meeting was held on Nov. 9 to follow up with answers to the questions raised at the earlier meeting. Residents’ priorities

Continued on next page

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and suggested solutions were evaluated by NDOT along with traffic data, crash information and field assessments to determine final project recommendations.

It turned out that the number one request from residents, a divider strip, was impractical for several reasons. Not only would the divider be a barrier to emergency vehicles, but residents of Pleasant Valley would only be able to turn right from roads and driveways, forcing a concentrated number of “U” turns at a few intersections or breaks in the median.

Other suggestions that came from the meetings:

- installing flashing lights to emphasize the speed limit changes,
- improving sight distance along the right-of-way by cutting back bushes,
- when the amount of traffic justifies a signal, installing a traffic light where East Lake Boulevard intersects with US-395,
- improving acceleration and deceleration lanes.

Although the cooperative effort was born out of tragedy, NDOT and several other public agencies joined together with citizens, elected officials and the media to



HAND PAINTED—Cub Scouts put their hand to erecting a sign reminding motorists to slow down. There have been no fatal crashes in this area since NDOT and the community initiated a few safety changes.

create solutions, improve communications and reinforce the need for safe speeds in Pleasant Valley.

The long-term prospects are also bright for Pleasant Valley. A new route between Carson City and Reno is being built and completion of the I-580 freeway in late 2008 will lessen the traffic through Pleasant Valley. Long-term strategies for the corridor also are being considered.

Highway Map Offers Latest Info

Users of the new 2005-2006 Official Nevada Highway Map may be impressed with the updates and changes, but probably they are equally impressed that the map is free.

More than 1.5 million maps are being printed for distribution through the Nevada Department of Transportation and the Nevada Commission on tourism.

The maps can be found at chambers of commerce, visitor bureaus, lodging establishments, gas stations and airports statewide. They are also available at NDOT district offices in Las Vegas, Sparks and Elko. A free map may be requested via the web at the following links:

<http://nevadadot.com/traveler/maps/>

<http://ncotweb.rufcorp.com/nevada/splash/web.asp>

or by calling NDOT at 775-888-7627.

In addition to providing directions, the map is a promotional piece, with one side devoted to listing chambers of commerce, historic mining towns and scenic byways.

Updates to the map itself show:

- An enlarged area map of the Las Vegas region which encompasses SR-159 to the west and Hoover Dam to the east
- Enhanced wilderness area descriptions
- Designation of the entire length of US-95 as the “Veterans Memorial Highway.”

The actual signs commemorating the highway are found near Hawthorne.



Plans Book Has the Details

It's a convenience for contractors and the Department of Transportation, and, at \$15, a real bargain. NDOT's biennial book, "Standard Plans for Road and Bridge Construction, 2005 Edition," is also available on CD. For those who may just have an occasional question and do not need a reference work, the book will also be accessible at no charge via the NDOT website at nevadadot.com.

Contractors can't work on an NDOT project without the standard plans book because it details requirements for construction items such as roadway, drainage, landscaping, traffic and bridge components.

The good news is that there aren't many changes to the 2005 edition, and they are marked in red. Most of the changes have to do with safety, and include:

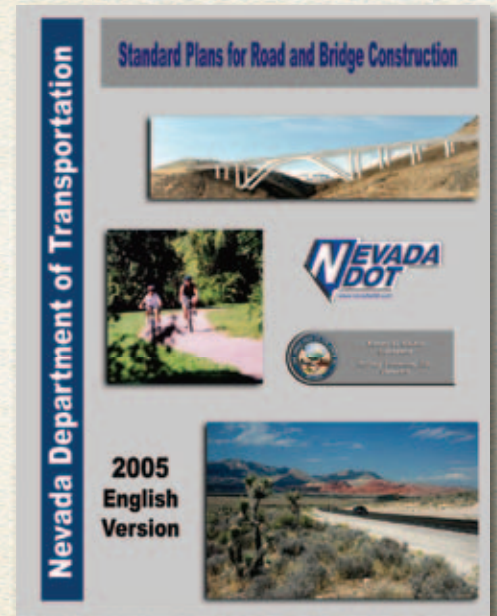
- Truncated dome concrete panels for installation in curb ramps,
- Reflectorized object marker installation on the impact head of guardrail end treatments,
- Buried end anchor in back slope for W-Beam and Thrie Beam,
- Installation of mailboxes
- Crossover median markers and signs for emergency vehicles

The plans book helps NDOT and contractors because they can just refer to sections of the manual rather than including detailed plans in every construction contract.

NDOT wants designers to use the standard plans, "because they are well thought out, go through several committees, and are proven in the field," said Dennis Coyle, who's in charge of the publication.

The book is a cooperative effort of the Federal Highway Administration, and NDOT staff representing Road Design, Bridge Design, Traffic Engineering, Hydraulics, Specifications, Quality Assurance, Maintenance and Construction.

The 2005 edition is available in hard copy at 8.5" x 11", 11" x 17" and CD. Contact NDOT Administrative Services, 1263 South Stewart Street, Carson City NV 89712.



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