



Rockfall

The climate and topography of our state present some unique and harsh challenges to our ability as the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) to keep our roads open and safe for travel. These challenges also present a real financial situation for us to deal with. On Monday morning, February



Massive scope of the Glenwood Rockfall event

16, at about 2:30am, a large rockfall occurred on I-70 in Glenwood Canyon. CDOT crews were able to flag people through the canyon on Monday until a second rockfall just west of Hanging Lake Tunnel occurred that night, at 9:03pm. For the safety of the traveling public we closed the interstate that night, necessitating a 5 hour detour for interstate traffic. Thirty cubic yards of rock came down on the initial slides (approximately three large tandem dump trucks of material). The largest single rock was the size of an SUV. CDOT has since brought down another 160 cubic yards of rock (another 16 dump trucks of material) in an effort to stabilize the area.

The detour and closures resulted in significant economic impact and enormous inconvenience to the public. It is estimated that this event, including cleanup and stabilization, will cost up to \$5 million. CDOT fronts that money, and over time will be reimbursed with federal emergency funds, much like we have done with other incidents, like the 2013 floods.

CDOT's geohazards budget includes things like rockfalls, sinkholes and landslides and is \$9.2 million for FY 2016 for the entire program. That \$9.2 million geohazard budget is used to help manage 1,500 recognized geological hazards around the state, including 760 rockfall sites. The funds are only enough to manage 3 to 5 small to medium sites or 1 to 2 large sites each year. Five years ago our rockfall budget was only \$4 million. Thanks to the Transportation Commission (TC) prioritizing the rockfall program, and better management of our cash balance with the RAMP program (Responsible Acceleration of Maintenance and Partnerships), CDOT has increased funding over the last few years for rockfall in addition to our other asset programs like surface treatment, traffic signals, tunnels and culverts.



recent Glenwood Rockfall

TIGER 2016

U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx has announced \$500 million will be made available for transportation projects across the country under an eighth round of Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) competitive grant program. Like the first seven rounds, FY 2016 TIGER discretionary grants will fund capital investments in surface transportation infrastructure and will be awarded on a competitive basis for projects that will have a significant impact on the nation, a metropolitan area, or a region. *continued on page 2*

FAST Act Focus

This month we wrap up our series on the latest long term Federal Transportation Authorization the FAST Act (short for Fixing America's Surface Transportation). In this issue we will take a closer look at the Planning and Environmental provisions. The FAST Act makes no significant changes to the performance-based planning and programming policy requirements included in the last federal authorization known as MAP-21. The Act does change a "should" to a "shall" regarding the inclusion of performance measures and the system performance report in a State's long-range transportation plan. The FAST Act includes new provisions to better support State DOTs and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) in the collection and management of data for performance-based planning and programming. This includes data analysis related to household travel behavior, travel demand models and performance management prediction tools.

The Act includes new Metropolitan and Statewide Planning requirements to encourage consultation with officials responsible for other types of planning activities that are affected by transportation in the area, including tourism and natural disaster risk reduction. ...continued on page 3.



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TIGER *...continued from page 1*

There is a strong focus on what the USDOT describes as ladders of opportunity projects. This focus area looks to increase connectivity to employment, education, services and other opportunities that support workforce development or contribute to community revitalization. Those projects should also be geared toward particularly disadvantaged groups including low income groups, persons with visible and hidden disabilities, elderly individuals, and minority persons and populations.

TIGER Facts

- Funds must be obligated by September 30th, 2019.
- Minimum project cost is \$5M.
- Deadline for submission is April 29th, 2016.

At least 20% of the funds provided (or at least \$100M) must be used for projects located in rural areas. Grants may be used for up to 80% of the costs of a project located in an urban area and up to 100% of the costs of a project located in a rural area.

Unlike last year, there's no set-aside for pre-construction or planning activities. Pre-construction must be part of an overall project that fits the TIGER guidelines. Primary Selection Criteria includes Safety, State of Good Repair, Economic Competitiveness, Quality of Life, and Environmental Sustainability. Secondary Selection Criteria includes Innovation, Partnership, and Disciplinary Integration. Each project must demonstrate project readiness evidenced by Technical Feasibility, Financial Feasibility, Project Schedule, Required Approvals, and Assessment of Project Risks and Mitigation Strategies. For more information on TIGER, contact Aaron Greco, CDOT Local Liaison at Aaron.greco@state.co.us.

FASTLANE Grants

The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) announced that it is now soliciting applications for the Fostering Advancements in Shipping and Transportation for the Long-term Achievement of National Efficiencies (FASTLANE) grant program. The FASTLANE program is a new program in the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act to fund critical freight and highway projects across the country. The FAST Act authorizes \$800 million in funding for the FASTLANE program for fiscal year 2016, with 25 percent reserved for rural projects, and 10 percent for smaller projects.

FASTLANE

- Applications due April 14th, 2016
- Minimum project size \$100M
(10% reserved for small projects)
- Minimum grant
\$25M for large projects
\$5M for small projects

The FASTLANE grant program provides funding for projects of national or regional significance. The program is designed to provide dedicated funding for projects that address major issues facing our nation's highways and bridges. For the first time in the U.S. Department of Transportation's 50-year history, the program establishes broad, multiyear eligibilities for freight infrastructure, including intermodal projects.

Eligible Projects include freight projects carried out on the National Highway Freight Network; highway or bridge projects carried out on the National Highway System including projects that add capacity on the Interstate System. Projects should improve mobility or be located in a national scenic area. Potential projects also include railway-highway grade crossing or grade separation projects; or a freight project that is 1) an intermodal or rail project, or 2) within the boundaries of a public or private freight rail, or intermodal facility. For more information on the FAST Act or other Federal matters, contact CDOT Federal Liaison Ron Papsdorf at Ron.papsdorf@state.co.us.

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FAST Act Focus *...continued from page 2*

Statewide and Metropolitan Transportation Plans are also now required to consider strategies to improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation as well as enhance travel and tourism.

The project delivery provisions in the FAST Act contain many important streamlining measures. FAST allows states to assume federal responsibility for project design, plans, specifications, estimates, contract awards and inspection of projects, to the maximum extent practicable. The Act also allows USDOT operating administrations to adopt the NEPA environmental documents and assessments developed by other operating administrations. It expands the multimodal Categorical Exclusion (CE) established in MAP-21 to provide the authority for any DOT operating administration to use a CE of another operating administration.

For more information on the FAST Act or other Federal matters, contact CDOT Federal Liaison Ron Papsdorf at Ron.papsdorf@state.co.us.