



Congress Avoids Shutdown Through Dec. 9th

Congress has passed a Continuing Resolution (CR) that will provide funding at FY 2016 levels for the federal government through December 9, 2016. It also includes the full year Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations bill, \$1.1 billion in emergency funding to fight and prevent the spread of the Zika virus, \$500 million in grants to help states recover from recent floods, and \$37 million to help fight the nation's opioid epidemic. The President signed the CR September 29.



While the CR avoids a government shutdown, it also means state departments of transportation and transit agencies around the country now face a delay of at least two months in receiving the scheduled Oct. 1 funding increases Congress already authorized and paid for through last year's Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. Those agencies will continue receiving federal funds at the fiscal 2016 level, rather than collect the higher amounts they are

due in fiscal 2017, until Congress acts on at least the surface transportation part of the budget.

For Colorado, the FY2016 Highway and Transit funding level is approximately \$657 million while the FY2017 funding level is about \$670 million. The increased FY2017 funding levels will fully flow to Colorado once Congress passes a full 2017 budget.

Whether or not Congress passes a full 2017 budget during the lame duck session following the November 8 elections or passes another CR at 2016 funding levels extending into the new year depends largely on the election results.

Seatbelts

As we reported back in the July edition of Interchange, The "Beware of the Beltless" campaign launched this year to address a seat belt crisis in Colorado – the 16 percent of Coloradans who don't buckle up represent over half of passenger vehicle fatalities. So far in 2016 fatalities are

up from this point last year - and last year saw a spike of almost 12%. As of September, 20 there have been 423 traffic fatalities across the state. Last year at this time there were 415. Of this year's total, 147 people were not wearing seat belts. Because many fatalities result from drivers and passengers not buckling up, CDOT is continuing its public awareness campaign in 2017 to get more people to wear seat belts.

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SAVING MONEY

Vehicle crashes cost Colorado **\$623M/year** in medical/work loss costs.

If Colorado's seat belt use rate goes to **90%** we can save **\$111M** per year. **\$1.2M** of these savings will come from reduced Medicaid expenditures in the first year.

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The “Beware of the Beltless” campaign featured increased public education and community outreach this summer. The campaign focused on the often unknown fact that not wearing a seat belt poses a risk to others in the vehicle, not just the unbuckled occupant. In the event of a crash, an unbelted occupant can act as a projectile and cause serious or even fatal harm to other occupants. Colorado is one of 15 states that does not have a primary seatbelt law. CDOT Executive Director Shailen Bhatt has stated CDOT’s support for a primary seat belt law as an effective way to reduce fatalities.

Bust A Move

The Colorado Department of Transportation’s (CDOT) trial run of Bustang service from Colorado Springs and Fort Collins to Mile High Stadium and back for Broncos’ games has been deemed a success and will continue for the rest of the 2016 season and for the 2017 season.

The initial run for the Atlanta Falcons game was a sellout. The “Bustang to Broncos” service will also run for the Oct. 30 game against the San Diego Chargers and, at press time, is close to a sellout. The service then will resume for the Nov. 27 game against the Kansas City Chiefs, the Dec. 18 game with the New England Patriots, the Oakland Raiders match on Jan. 1, 2017, and for any home playoff games.

Bustang service on the Interstate-70 mountain corridor was recently increased. In mid September, CDOT began offering more options and flexibility for travelers by offering supplemental service between Vail and Denver. The expansion of the west Bustang line reflects CDOT’s continued effort to connect Coloradans to major population and employment centers and local transit providers. Since beginning operations in July 2015, Bustang has exceeded ridership, revenue and fare box recovery projections.

CDOT Director of Transit and Rail Mark Imhoff explains that overflow and increased demand along the West Line through the mountains prompted CDOT’s decision to offer a supplement service. “From the



beginning, we’ve taken a step-by-step approach to Bustang, expanding schedules and service as demand dictates. Our mountain residents are asking for more options, and the ridership supports that. We’ve seen a 103 percent increase between Vail, Frisco and Denver in the past 12 months.”

Daily round-trip service will depart from Vail at 7:05 a.m., returning at 5:30 p.m. “The Vail-Denver schedule goes against the flow of mountain recreation traffic to efficiently transport folks back and forth to Denver for access to services,” adds CDOT Bus Operations Manager Michael Timlin. “And likewise, people looking for alternative transportation to the mountains now have another option.”

Buses are wheelchair accessible with Wi-Fi access, USB ports, power outlets and bathrooms. For more information on Bustang visit: <http://www.ridebustang.com/>

SAVING LIVES

States that recently passed Primary Seat Belts laws had a **12%** drop in unrestrained fatalities.

In 2015, seat belts **saved 200 lives** in Colorado.