



Legislature To Begin Session

Members of the Colorado House and Senate will convene on January 11th, 2017 for the first regular session of the 71st General Assembly. The 120 day session promises to be as spirited as last year with plenty of conversations about transportation policies. After the November election, the make up of the legislature stayed the same, with the Republicans holding control of the Senate, and the Democrats earning three new seats in the House of Representatives



During this session transportation funding promises to be a major topic of conversation. Leaders in the House and the Senate are already working through a variety of options to get additional funds dedicated to infrastructure projects around the state. It is uncertain at this time what form a transportation funding package would take, however, legislators across party lines agree that something needs to be done to address the significant infrastructure funding gap. Additional topics that may arise this year include snowplow safety, autonomous vehicles, contracting regulations and the rise in traffic fatalities across the state.

If you have questions feel free to contact CDOT Legislative Liaison, Andy Karsian at Andy.Karsian@state.co.us

I-25 Accelerated

The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) announced plans to accelerate the environmental and planning process for improvements on I-25 from C-470 to Colorado Springs, with attention to the gap area from Monument to Castle Rock. By accelerating the environmental planning for I-25, CDOT will have a project ready for construction by summer 2019—with a project fully constructed between Castle Rock to Monument in five years—if funding is identified for construction. “As congestion continues to build along I-25, CDOT has decided that this project can’t wait,” said CDOT Executive Director Shailen Bhatt. “We’re going to do our part and get ready for construction in two years. Now we need others to help us come up with the \$300 to \$400 million we need to build it.”

....cont on page 2



Left to right: FHWA Colorado Division Administrator John Cater; Colorado Springs Mayor John Suthers; CDOT Executive Director Shailen Bhatt; Douglas County Commissioner Roger Partridge; and El Paso County Commissioner Sallie Clark.

I-25 *....cont from page 1*

CDOT is able to accelerate the funding of the environmental planning, thanks to the financing of the C-470 Express Lanes project. CDOT plans to use funds that otherwise were allocated to serve as a “backstop” for loans that will be financing the project. As the details of the loans have been finalized in the last two weeks, it became clear that fewer of those funds would be necessary, allowing CDOT to redirect \$15 million of those funds to I-25 environmental and preconstruction work. Those funds, along with the \$6 million that is already programmed for the current Planning & Environmental Linkages (PEL) study, will allow the department to prepare for a construction project, should construction funds become available.

CDOT plans to concurrently pursue other aspects of pre-construction, such as positioning for design-build procurement now to enable procurement of a construction project team to be accelerated starting at the end of 2017 when construction funding must be identified, analyze and pursue innovative financing through potential toll revenue (as applicable), survey work and early right-of-way acquisition (as necessary).

"This is an improvement that will have immediate positive impact on safety and the economy, and we commend CDOT and our neighboring governments for their support in working to streamline the process and get that section of the interstate construction-ready as quickly as possible."

*Colorado Springs Mayor
John Suthers*

Federal Funding

With less than sixty minutes to spare before the 11:59 pm December 9th deadline the U.S. Senate passed the latest Continuing Resolution (CR) that will fund the Federal Government until April 28th, 2017. The bill includes \$1 billion for the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Emergency Relief (ER) Program for repair of damaged highways.

The FHWA ER Program funding is significant as it will allow CDOT to tap into about \$250 million to complete all the remaining 2013 Colorado flood permanent highway repairs, many of which include resiliency components to reduce the risk of future damage. These remaining projects are located in seven counties across Colorado and include US 287 and SH 14 north of Fort Collins, I-25 in Colorado Springs, US 34 through the Big Thompson Canyon, and SH 7 in Boulder County. For more information on Federal funding contact CDOT Federal Liaison, Ron Papsdorf at Ron.Papsdorf@state.co.us

Over 7,200 Feel The Heat in 2016

Parties and celebrations rang in the New Year across Colorado, but for 272 impaired drivers, the ring came from law enforcement sirens instead of festive horns and whistles. From Dec. 30, 2016, to Jan. 3, 2017, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), Colorado State Patrol (CSP) and statewide law agencies collaborated to ensure state roads were free of impaired drivers as part of The Heat Is On New Year's Eve DUI enforcement. The 272 arrests were a decrease from the 396 drivers arrested during the same period last year.

The New Year's Eve holiday capped the 2016 The Heat Is On enforcement periods. During the 12 enforcements, law enforcement arrested 7,272 drivers for DUI (according to preliminary results). The enforcement periods lasted between four and 108 days, depending on the event.