



Westbound I-70 Twin Tunnels – May 2014

Construction Update

Since shifting I-70 traffic in early April to vacate the westbound tunnel bore, the Kraemer-Obayashi joint venture contracting team has made good progress in the first month of work.

About a dozen blasts have been conducted. Most of these have been done inside the tunnel to create two center headings that are enabling crews to work simultaneously from the center of the tunnel to the east and from the center of the tunnel to the west. This approach will help expedite the work to ensure the tunnel widening work is complete by the end of the year. As of late April, crews had excavated about 100 feet of the 675-foot long tunnel. About 1,000 cubic yards of rock have been removed from the tunnel with about 20,000 cubic yards to go.



Cranes are used to hoist crew members above the westbound lanes of I-70 to perform rock blasting and rock scaling work.

Initial rock scaling work done outside the tunnel has created the work areas needed to get equipment and crews in place to perform the rock blasts outside the tunnel. About 50 blasts will be done outside the tunnel, with the majority of these taking place on the rock face wall just east of the tunnel.

Both tunnel and rock face blasting work will continue throughout the remainder of the summer. While efforts will be made to schedule tunnel blasts during the late night or early morning hours when possible, federal law mandates the rock face blasts are done during daylight hours. Traffic will be stopped in both directions to conduct each blast. Tunnel blasts require stopping traffic for about 15 minutes while rock face blasts could require stopping traffic for up to 30 minutes if rock removal (scaling) work is needed following the blast. Depending on the amount of material to be removed after a rock face blast, intermittent traffic stops could be needed throughout the daylight hours for subsequent scaling operations. Delays could exceed 30 minutes while the queues are cleared, so motorists are encouraged to allow extra time when traveling I-70 this summer.

Blast times will be set about 24 hours in advance, but because weather and other factors can cause the schedules to change, everyone is encouraged to sign up for the Colorado Department of Transportation's text and email alerts to receive the latest information. To sign up for these alerts, visit <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/CODOT/subscriber/new?pop=t&qsp=1851>

What's in a name?

Last year, Colorado lawmakers passed a resolution to rename the Twin Tunnels near Idaho Springs. The resolution calls for renaming them the "Veterans Memorial Tunnels" in honor of those who have served this country. Official signs designating the new name will be placed after the completion of the westbound tunnel widening.

Peak Period Shoulder Lane project coming soon to I-70 corridor

The Colorado Department of Transportation selected Mountain Corridor Constructors, a joint venture of URS and Lawrence Construction, to deliver the Peak Period Shoulder Lane (PPSL) project. This project will widen certain areas of eastbound I-70 between mile marker 232 near Empire to just east of mile

marker 241 where it ties into the highway widening done during last year's Eastbound I-70 Twin Tunnels project. The widened shoulders in these areas would be used as an additional eastbound travel lane during peak travel times. Construction is scheduled to start in June.