

# US 34 BIG THOMPSON CANYON

## BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT

December 2009

### Project Overview

In mid-November 2009, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) began a bridge replacement project on US 34 between milepost 65.4 and 66.3. The project will replace two structurally deficient bridges that were originally constructed in 1937. SEMA Construction, Inc. is the contractor of this \$3.8 million project scheduled to be complete by the end of May 2010.

### What Work has Taken Place?

To date, crews have installed bridge caissons at the upper bridge, milepost 65.4. Caisson work at the lower bridge will begin the week of December 7th and is expected to take approximately two weeks to complete. Crews will begin construction of the bridge abutments after the caisson work is complete at each bridge.



### Traffic Impacts

Over the next couple of months, motorists can expect single-lane alternating traffic on US 34 at both bridges from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Flaggers will be on site to direct motorists through the work zone. Minor delays are expected.

### Upcoming Full Closure of US 34

To complete the new bridges, CDOT and its contractor will have to completely close US 34 for up to 12 days for each bridge in early 2010. The contractor has tentatively scheduled the closure dates; however, the dates are subject to change based upon weather, the fabrication of girders and other construction elements. Updates will be provided should the schedule change.

**Upper Bridge (milepost 65.4):** February 1, 2010 through February 12, 2010

**Lower Bridge (milepost 66.3):** March 1, 2010 through March 12, 2010.

### Why Does US 34 Have to Close?

Unfortunately, there are many factors that prevent CDOT from constructing a detour. First of all, this segment of US 34 is in a canyon with limited space. In order for CDOT to build a detour, additional right of way would need to be purchased, which includes many homes. In addition, there would be numerous environmental impacts with the Big Thompson River below the bridges and the many trees along the route.

Further, both bridges were constructed in 1937 and are steel truss bridges. With steel truss bridges, it is impossible to remove half of the bridge at a time as once a portion of a truss bridge is removed, the entire bridge must be removed as well.

CDOT has decided to close US 34 during the winter months rather than the summer so traffic is not impacted during peak tourists times. CDOT is working with emergency service providers and the county to ensure the safety of motorists and residents remains the number one priority.

### What is the Detour Route?

CDOT will officially sign the detour route to take motorists to State Highway 66 and over to US 36 to avoid heavy traffic and large loads on local roads. However, residents will still be able to use local roads as a detour route, as they see fit.

### What is the Timeline for the Project?

Contractor Begins Construction – Mid-November 2009

First Closure of US 34- Early February 2010

Second Closure of US 34- Early March 2010

Construction Complete – By Memorial Day 2010

### Questions?

If you have questions about the project, please contact Mindy Crane at [mindy.crane@dot.state.co.us](mailto:mindy.crane@dot.state.co.us) or 303-757-9469. You can also call the project hotline at 970-685-0229. Please visit us on the Web at <http://www.dot.state.co.us/US34TrussBridges/>.

