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Earmarked Funds Set for U.S. 50 Passing Lanes

PUEBLO – The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) has been exploring how to best apply funds earmarked by the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users, or SAFETEA-LU, for U.S. 50 in a manner that ensures the most effective use of those dollars within federal guidelines.

“We are working with CDOT to ensure that Colorado drivers who use Highway 50 East will have wider roads, making their travels safer, easier and more convenient,” said U.S. Representative John Salazar. “More importantly, safety has always been our top priority for drivers living in communities east of Pueblo. A special thank you goes to the community leaders who helped make this possible including the Otero County Commissioners who suggested that we look at passing lanes as an alternative for these funds, and CDOT for moving swiftly on our road concerns.”

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) plan to use a portion of these earmarked funds to provide for passing opportunities along U.S. 50 between Pueblo and Fowler (Milemarker 338 or approximately 59th Lane to Milemarker 341 or approximately ½ mile west of 62nd Lane). U.S. 50 is a two-lane highway from Milemarker 329 (east of Pueblo) through the Town of Fowler to Milemarker 359 (near Manzanola).

“CDOT recognizes that this particular stretch of U.S. 50 is perceived and well recognized by many of the various commuters and travelers as a trouble spot,” said CDOT Project Manager Mike Perez. “We hope that providing passing opportunities in this area will allow drivers to pass more safely.”

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U.S. 50, in this area, serves a wide variety of highway users including a significant number of agricultural vehicles, which makes it difficult for other vehicles to pass. The design of the new passing lanes is anticipated to provide a 12-foot passing lane and wider shoulders with a rumble strip to allow for safer passing.

The design phase of this passing lane project will begin very soon. The project involves the construction of approximately 1.5 miles of passing lanes in the eastbound direction and 1.5 miles in the westbound direction (including transition lengths).

CDOT is also currently working on a Tier 1 Environmental Impact Study which will result in a general corridor location decision and highway facility type from Pueblo to the vicinity of the Kansas state line. This study is expected to be completed in 2009.

For additional information about SAFETEA-LU funds please contact CDOT Resident Engineer, Karen Rowe at 719-546-5438.

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