

INFORMATION RELEASE



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AHTD REVISES LANE CLOSURE SCHEDULE FOR INTERSTATE 49

LITTLE ROCK (10-10) – Lane closures planned for the weekend of October 17-19 on Interstate 49 are being rescheduled, according to Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD) officials.

A contractor has been widening 2.6 miles of Interstate 49 between Wagon Wheel Road (Exit 76) in Springdale and Highway 264 (Exit 78) in Lowell. Pavement work is now complete on the northbound side, though the inside lane will remain closed until work on the median barrier wall is finished. Plans to reduce southbound traffic to one lane next weekend are being changed due to expected high traffic in the area.

“The northbound improvements last weekend went very well and were finished ahead of schedule,” stated AHTD Director Scott Bennett. “For the southbound work, we knew that this weekend football fans would be traveling to Northwest Arkansas for the Arkansas-Alabama game and we wanted to have all lanes open to handle the increase in traffic. So we scheduled the work for the 17th –19th. However, the War Eagle Craft Fair is that weekend. The festival brings in large crowds from a multi-state area and we didn’t want to affect the flow of traffic for that, so the work won’t take place that weekend, either.”

With homecoming at the University of Arkansas the following weekend (October 24th) and the increased potential for cooler and wetter weather, options are becoming limited, Bennett noted. “Because the contractor will be laying asphalt, we have to consider the upcoming cold weather and the fact that November is a rainy month. Our window of opportunity is growing short because asphalt can’t be laid in temperatures below 40 degrees. While we want to be a good neighbor and be mindful of the impact special events have on traffic, we also don’t want this project to extend into next year.”

Bennett said the Department is evaluating reasonable options for completing the work. “Allowing the contractor to concentrate all their resources into a single extended period of time, like we did for a weekend on the northbound lanes, is the most cost-effective way to complete the work. But that may not work for us now. We will announce a new schedule to finish the work soon.”

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