

**Washington State Department of Transportation - News**  
South Central Region – P.O. Box 12560 - Yakima, WA 98909-2560

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**WSDOT kicks off construction of the I-90 Snoqualmie Pass East project to improve safety and reliability of vital cross-state route**

HYAK – The Washington State Department of Transportation today began construction on the I-90 Snoqualmie Pass East project (I-90 Project), a project that will build five miles of wider, safer and more reliable highway for east-west travelers.

The \$595 million, 2005 Transportation Partnership Account-funded project was scheduled to begin in 2010. But a portion of the project was moved ahead a year after engineers developed a plan to build a detour bridge near the Gold Creek area at the Keechelus Lake reservoir to limit construction impacts on the movement of freight and people across Snoqualmie Pass.

“By building the detour structure now, ahead of the heavy construction work next year, we can limit the impact to I-90 travelers. It is another way that we can keep the continuous flow of goods and people moving over the mountains,” said Paula Hammond, Washington Transportation Secretary, “I-90 is a critically important cross-state route. The improvements we’re building on I-90 will not only support our state’s economy by improving the safety and reliability of this vital east-west transportation corridor, but it also supports the creation of jobs in communities throughout the region.”

WSDOT expects to complete all improvements planned for the funded five-mile I-90 Project from Hyak to Keechelus Dam in 2015. The completion of the I-90 Project will:

- Reduce road closures associated with avalanche and avalanche control work by building a new, more efficient snowshed.
- Add a new travel lane in each direction to accommodate predicted increases in traffic volume.
- Replace deteriorating concrete pavement for a smoother, safer ride.
- Minimize the risk of rock and other falling debris from reaching the interstate by stabilizing unstable rock slopes.
- Build new and extend existing chain up / off areas.
- Improve sight distance by reducing sharp roadway curves.
- Re-connect wildlife habitats over and under the highway.

“This project began design and environmental work 10 years ago. A lot of credit goes to the project team, local communities and project partners that have worked so long and so hard on this project,” said Randy Giles, I-90 Project Director.

While travel delays through the construction area this year will be minimal, visual distractions are possible. Drivers may also encounter trucks entering and leaving the interstate around Keechelus Lake and the Crystal Springs Sno-Park.

When heavy construction begins next summer, WSDOT will keep two lanes of traffic open in each direction during peak travel times. Single-lane closures are expected during off-peak hours, and minor delays are anticipated.

WSDOT received \$595 million to design and construct the first five miles of the I-90 Project from Hyak to Keechelus Dam from the 2005 Transportation Partnership Account, which includes supplemental funding from the 2009 Washington State Legislature. The remaining 10 project miles from Keechelus Dam to Easton remain unfunded.

For more information on the Hyak to Keechelus Dam project, please visit:

[www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/i90/snoqualmiepassseast/hyaktokeechelusdam/](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/i90/snoqualmiepassseast/hyaktokeechelusdam/)

[View photos](#) from the event on Flickr.

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