



CANYON COUNTY

# Commuters rejoice! I-84 stretch will finally be widened thanks to a \$90 million grant

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Canyon County drivers might see traffic jams ease on their way through Nampa, now that the state has finally received the \$90.2 million grant needed to pay for lane widening. It's the largest grant ever received by the Idaho Transportation Department.

The problem area on Interstate 84, between the Karcher Road and Franklin Boulevard exits in Nampa, has long driven drivers crazy been a problem for drivers in the area due to a lack of funding for repairs and expansion.

The project, led by the Idaho Transportation Department, would add a third lane to each direction of the 2.8-mile section.

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The grant application was a joint effort of the Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho, commonly called COMPASS, and ITD. In June, Idaho's congressional delegation made the announcement that the project was a finalist for the grant.

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The Infrastructure for Rebuilding America Grant is set to cover about 60 percent of the estimated \$150 million price tag.

The rest of the funding for the project mostly comes from the state funding. About \$39 million comes from the state transportation expansion and congestion mitigation fund, \$15 million from the surplus eliminator, \$2.8 million from the cigarette tax and \$2.6 million from state traditional transportation funds. Additionally, Canyon County and the city of Caldwell both contributed \$125,000 to the project from local funds.

This section of the interstate's improvements are a part of a larger, ongoing, \$820 million I-84 corridor project that began in 2008 and spans from Gowen Road in Boise to Caldwell.

Idaho Gov. Butch Otter, Deputy Federal Highway Administrator Brandye Hendrickson, Ada County Commissioner Dave Case and other local officials spoke Wednesday at the celebration.

Case is the chairman of COMPASS.

"It goes without saying that funding transportation is a big challenge, both nationally and locally," he said. "Ada and Canyon counties are the fastest-growing counties in the fastest-growing state in our nation. We are acutely aware of the impacts of growth combined with the limited available funding to meet even our basics needs."

The Nampa corridor was the main priority for COMPASS, based on safety, freight, congestion and economic development needs, he said, making this grant award especially important.

ITD Director Brian Ness said the grant is a celebration of partnerships between local, state and federal authorities.

Idaho was one of only 26 projects selected from the 234 applications the Federal Highway Administration received. The 26 projects are valued at \$1.5 billion.

Canyon County Commissioner Tom Dale said the grant was especially important for maintaining public safety.

"It's a big, frustrating bottleneck," Dale said about the current congestion.

He added that between 2009 and 2015, there were 159 fatal and injury crashes in the 2.8-mile stretch. It's expected that there will be 134 fewer crashes in the first five years after the project is complete.

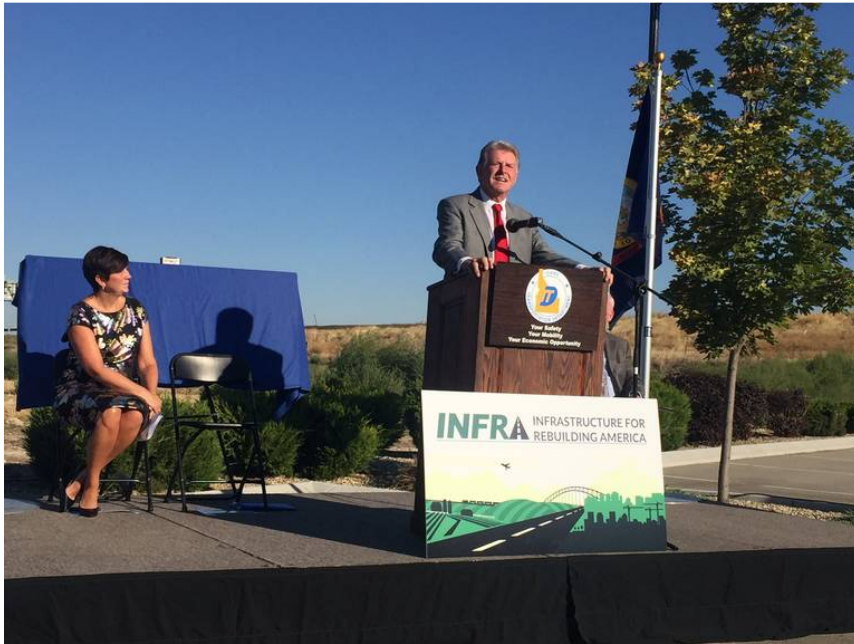
"We will all be safer, and more prosperous in the days to come," Dale said.

Otter said expanding the highway was an important part of exporting Idaho’s goods to other states and countries. He supports direct, user-pay proposals for upgrades, saying dipping into the state’s general fund is dangerous.

“It’s so important to the future of the state, it’s so important to the economy, it’s so important to the safety of every citizen in the state of Idaho,” Otter said.

The first phase of the construction would begin in late September or early October.

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Gov. Butch Otter spoke Wednesday in Nampa about the \$90.2 million federal grant awarded to the Idaho Transportation Department to continue improvements to the Interstate 84 corridor in Nampa. Deputy Federal Highway Administrator Brandye Hendrickson, left, is also pictured. Ruth Brown

< 1 of 2 >

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