

Eastern Arizona Courier

[Print Page](#)

News

Graham County gets smallest ADOT award

By Diane Saunders
Staff Writer

Graham County is in line for a \$191,000 Arizona Department of Transportation project to improve the intersection of Highway 70 and Eighth Avenue in Safford.

This is the smallest project in any of Arizona's 15 counties that will be paid for with money from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act — known as the stimulus package.

Other projects ranged from \$1.15 million in Greenlee County to \$30 million in Pinal County, according to the Arizona State Transportation Board.

Graham's project is the smallest because there were no other "shovel-ready projects" in the county, said Bill Harmon, ADOT Safford District engineer.

The projects are expected to gain final approval from the State Transportation Board on March 13, Harmon said.

In addition to new striping on Highway 70 at Eighth Avenue, the project will include retrofitting eight traffic signals in Safford and Thatcher with battery backups. This will allow traffic signals on highways 191 and 70 to continue operating in the event of a power outage, Harmon said.

The retrofitted signals include the light at Highway 191 and Discovery Park Boulevard and the light at the intersection of highways 191 and 70.

Harmon said the Highway 191 widening project could not be included in the ADOT projects. It is not eligible because the rights-of-way have not been purchased. Much of the land is owned by the federal Bureau of Land Management and the State Land Department.

In addition, the environmental clearances for continuation of the project have not been obtained.

County officials hope the widening project will be included with those being funded with stimulus money.

"Hopefully, we'll still be able to push the ADOT Board and have at least another stretch of 191 done," County Supervisor Mark Herrington said.

County Manager Terry Cooper agreed, saying a portion of the Highway 191 project could still be paid for with stimulus money.

The small ADOT project will not have an effect on county road projects, which will be paid for with a different portion of the stimulus money, Herrington said. The county is seeking \$22 million in stimulus money for roads.

Safford City Manager David Kincaid said the \$191,000 ADOT project will be a good thing for the city.

"It will be helpful in the monsoon season so we won't have to send out our patrol officers (to direct traffic)," Kincaid said.

He added that the SouthEastern Arizona Governments Organization is expected to receive at least \$10

million or as much as \$13.6 million from the federal stimulus package. The city of Safford will seek about \$941,000 from that money to pay for relocating utility lines from the old Eighth Avenue bridge to the new bridge.

The organization, known as SEAGO, is a regional planning agency that serves Graham, Greenlee, Cochise and Santa Cruz counties. The SEAGO Transportation Program receives money from ADOT, the Federal Highways Administration and the Federal Transit Administration for projects in the region.

[Archives](#) [Business Directory](#) --< :: [Calendar](#) :: [Classifieds](#) :: [Contact us](#) :: [Entertainment](#)

[Financial](#) :: [Guestbook](#) :: [Health](#) :: [Home](#) :: [Lifestyle](#) :: [News](#) :: [Opinion](#) :: [Obituaries](#)

[Old West](#) :: [Place an Ad](#) :: [Submit a Letter](#) :: [Sports](#) :: [Subscribe](#) :: [Updates](#) :: [Visitors Guide](#)

Copyright © 2009 Eastern Arizona Courier. All rights reserved.