



ADOT losing money

by Deanna Morgan

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It's no surprise to anyone our nation's economy is in bad shape, or that things don't seem to be getting any better. Home foreclosures continue, groceries prices remain at an all time high, and here in Arizona, a decrease in car sales now has state agencies taking drastic measures.

ADOT has to come up with \$100 million in budget cuts. If you think that doesn't affect you, think again.

"If cars aren't selling, we aren't collecting as much vehicle license tax," says Jack Lewis, Region Manager of the Motor Vehicle Division Customer Service Program.

Cars aren't selling and the state isn't collecting needed gas taxes.

"Our revenue depends on gas taxes and revenue sales," says Linda Ritter, Spokesperson for ADOT.

Ritter says because the state hasn't brought in enough gas tax dollars, federal funding has gone away. The department now has to consider closing 12 MVD's statewide. 24 vacancies still haven't been filled at the MVD on broadmont. On top of possibly closing business, ADOT has to defer construction projects.

"The deferral of these construction projects means that the construction will not occur for some time," says Ritter.

Then starting next weekend, ADOT will close 13 rest areas along the highway. The Canoa rest area just south of Tucson is one of them. They're temporary closures, but Ritter says they'll save about two and a half million dollars.

The bottom line: ADOT is running out of money. It didn't help that \$500 million in transportation funding was used to help the state's budget problems.

"I've been with motor vehicle 20 years and I've seen a lot of changes, but this is probably the worst change I've seen come along," says Lewis.

Going back to the highway issue here -- workers will pick up litter if it becomes a safety issue. Other than that, clean up won't be a priority. Also, the department will be partnering with local businesses so that drivers will have other places to stop and use the bathroom.

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