



November 2, 2009

## Arizona considers closing remaining rest areas

The state of Arizona has already closed 13 of its 18 rest areas because of mounting budget woes, and the five rest areas still open may be on the chopping block.

That's because Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer has asked state agencies to consider another round of budget cuts – an additional 15 percent – which could mean the shuttering of all the rest areas in the state.

Arizona Department of Transportation Spokesman Doug Nintzel said the agency “has looked at what an additional 15 percent cut to the agency’s operating budget could do at this midway point in the fiscal year.”

“The moves that have been made and those that might occur are difficult ones, but the state’s budget cuts have forced the agency into steps that more drivers will notice.”

Nintzel said ADOT has shared the information with state policymakers “in the hopes that dedicated transportation funding will not be transferred to fix the state’s overall budget challenge.

“For now, we’re forced to make difficult choices,” he said.

Nintzel said ADOT has had some frank discussions about the rest area closures and the impact this could have on highway safety. He said the Arizona Department of Public Safety has “expressed a desire to work with drivers who safely find a parking location close to our highways.”

“They (DPS) indicate officers will try to understand the challenges related to rest area closures and look at parking situations on a case-by-case basis,” he said.

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