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ADOT cuts leave Prescott area agencies awaiting their fate

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Matt Hinshaw/
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Among the 90 employees, mostly from the Division of Motor Vehicles, ADOT said this week would be laid off Dec. 1 are a handful from offices in Prescott (pictured) and Cottonwood.

The Prescott area is sure to experience a reduction in [Arizona Department of Transportation](#) services because of deep state budget cuts, but the details of most of those changes still are up in the air.

ADOT has experienced gas and vehicle license tax revenue drops alongside \$500 million in revenue transfers this year, and the agency still has to cut another \$100 million. That's all before the Legislature and governor decide how to shave another \$2 billion from the statewide budget.

ADOT already closed 13 of its 18 rest areas this past month, including the McGuireville rest area along Interstate 17 in Yavapai County. The only other rest area in Yavapai County, Sunset Point along Interstate 17, remains open.

And the agency already has cut 10 percent of its workforce, or about 450 employees, since a hiring freeze went into effect in February 2008.

MVD CUTS

ADOT notified another 90 employees this week that they would be laid off Dec. 1, mostly Division of Motor Vehicles employees.

Those layoffs include four customer service employees at the Division of Motor Vehicles offices in Prescott and Cottonwood.

Spokesperson Laura Douglas said ADOT managers aren't divulging how many of those four layoffs occurred at each of the two offices. Currently, the Prescott MVD office has 17 employees while the Cottonwood office has 11 employees.

ADOT said it will lay off another 25 mostly MVD employees by Dec. 31.

MVD staff already is down by about one-third because of unfilled vacancies and layoffs.

ADOT calculates that MVD customers finished their business on an average of 23 minutes last year and 25 minutes so far this year.

"Obviously, we're expecting that time to increase," Douglas said.

ADOT plans to close down 12 of its 61 MVD field offices, but is awaiting U.S. Department of Justice approval under the Voting Rights Act because people can register to vote at MVD offices, Douglas explained. ADOT submitted the proposal to the Department of Justice earlier this month, and hopes for a response by the end of the year, she said.

MVD has only two Yavapai County offices, in Prescott and Cottonwood.

The MVD already ended Saturday service, which was offered only in Phoenix and Tucson.

ROAD CREW CUTS

Rumors that ADOT will not plow snow off highways this winter are not true, spokesman Bill Pederson said.

However, ADOT will have to cut back on its road maintenance and snowplow services, he said.

ADOT officials hope to know next week how many road maintenance and snowplow workers they will cut from specific areas such as Prescott, Pederson said.

ADOT road construction projects will continue if they already are underway, but future projects could be pushed back, he said. Again, ADOT officials have not made any decisions on any specific future projects, he said.

On the bright side, \$350 million in federal stimulus money is helping the road projects budget. ADOT has applied for \$464.5 million more.

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