

ADOT lays off 115

Because of the ongoing and deepening State of Arizona fiscal deficit, the Arizona Department of Transportation was recently forced to implement a series of layoffs as part of its roadmap to reduce expenses and balance a budget ravaged by declining transportation revenue and legislative transfers.

With state transportation funding depleted by \$500 million in fund transfers and continued declines in transportation revenues, ADOT last month announced its budget roadmap for fiscal year 2010 to address a \$100 million shortfall through steps that include the temporary closure of most highway rest areas, a plan to shutter a dozen Motor Vehicle Division offices, and a reduction in roadway maintenance.

Recently 90 ADOT staff members were notified that they were the first to be laid off. The staff who are being forced to depart are primarily in MVD customer service roles - the very professionals who last year kept office visit times to a statewide average of 23 minutes for 4 million customers.

Additional layoffs, following a review by the Arizona Department of Administration, will occur before the end of 2009 as part of ADOT's published budget roadmap, a comprehensive plan to account for the revenue declines and \$500 million transfer of transportation funds over the past two years by lawmakers. The layoff plan totaling about 115 employees is expected to save \$6 million annually.

Spurred by the state's \$2 billion budget deficit, these layoffs are separate from future legislative cuts that may attempt to balance the state budget. Future reductions in transportation funds, if enacted, will require further cuts in both operations and personnel. With dedicated funding primarily from the vehicle license tax and gas tax, transportation programs in Arizona are designed to be self-funded. Transfers over a series of years, amplified as the budget crisis worsened, have siphoned away these dedicated dollars, leaving ADOT financially constrained and severely challenged to deliver public services.

In light of these reductions in customer service, there are options. Residents can conduct a range of online transactions through www.ServiceArizona.com or by visiting one of more than 140 third-party vendors statewide. Visit www.azmvdservices.com to find locations providing MVD services.