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News Release

For Immediate Release

New Traffic Technology to Gather Info for Motorists, Engineers

The City of Springfield and the Missouri Department of Transportation District 8 office soon will begin installing technology upgrades that will help drivers maneuver around traffic backups and help traffic engineers better manage those gridlock-generating incidents.

The new features will not eliminate traffic jams but are designed to help reduce their impact. These features will provide information about how traffic is moving, helping drivers make quicker, more informed decisions on what streets and roads to take or avoid.

Installation of what is called the Advanced Traffic Management System (ATMS) will begin in late September and will take about six months to complete. The equipment includes 16 electronic message signs, 27 traffic viewing cameras and 31 wireless traffic detectors embedded in roadways.

The installations will result in lane closings and occasional road closings at 60 sites, including 20 intersections. Work on arterial streets will be done during daytime, non-peak traffic hours, typically between 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.

When it goes into operation, the new system will be managed from the new Transportation Management Center under construction at the City’s Public Works Operations Center, 1111 W. Chestnut Expressway.

The ATMS seeks to gather and distribute information to motorists about traffic flow in order to make better use of the existing street and road system. As population growth continues in Springfield and southwest Missouri and traffic increases, solutions to congestion beyond costly projects to add lanes and build more roads must be sought.

The ATMS will provide detailed, real-time traffic information that will be available online at www.OzarksTraffic.info for motorists and the news media.

Traffic alerts also will be flashed on new, permanently mounted electronic message signs being erected along Springfield's freeways and selected arterial streets. This information will help people make timely decisions as they drive about which roads or streets to take or avoid.

The ATMS data will allow traffic engineers to zero in on traffic problems, from crashes to holiday shopping congestion, and make temporary signal adjustments, and will quickly put information on the message signs. This will help drivers maneuver around the congestion.

ATMS camera images will allow emergency agencies to decide how to better respond when called out to traffic incidents or when heading to incidents through areas where traffic is backed up.
The ATMS will be similar to the KC Scout system in Kansas City (www.kcscout.net), though Springfield’s system will include more arterial roadways, which play a greater role in our transportation system.

The ATMS cameras will operate in a similar manner to the 42 traffic cameras that are already in place and being monitored by City and MoDOT traffic engineers in the TMC in downtown Springfield. The new and existing cameras have no connection to the City’s red-light camera system, which itself is on hold following a Missouri Supreme Court ruling in March.

The work occurring during the next six months will establish the ATMS on state and City roadways throughout the Springfield area with the greatest amount of traffic congestion. When funds are available, the ATMS will be expanded to other sections of Springfield.

Expansion to other growing communities near Springfield, including Ozark, Nixa, Republic and Branson, is a long-term goal, although funding has not been identified. Partnerships with these communities would accelerate and help pay for expansion to a regional traffic information network.

The installation of the ATMS will cost $1.555 million, with $1.026 million in federal funds and $529,000 in state and city funds. U.S. Sen. Christopher S. Bond secured much of the federal money for the project.

The prime contractor, Ewing Signal of Nixa, will coordinate with MoDOT and City traffic-signal technicians to connect the new ATMS equipment to the existing fiber optic network. MoDOT and the City will monitor and maintain the system after installation is complete.

Traffic engineers from the City of Springfield and MoDOT will present more information about the ATMS to City Council at the regular Council lunch meeting at 11:30 a.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 21 in the Busch Building fourth floor conference room. The meeting is open, and engineers will be available for questions following the presentation. A Sept. 14 radio interview with City traffic engineers about the ATMS and other traffic issues is available at www.springfieldmo.gov/citytalk

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