

INFORMATION RELEASE



Office of the Director

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POLICY FOR USE OF CABLE MEDIAN BARRIERS IMPLEMENTED BY THE AHTD

LITTLE ROCK (10-10) – The Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD) has announced the implementation of a new cable median barrier policy.

Cable median barriers, designed to reduce the chances of vehicles crossing the median into oncoming traffic, will be installed on over 398 miles of Arkansas' freeways and expressways over the next three years.

“Motorists can expect to see considerably more cable median barriers being installed across the state beginning in early 2013,” stated AHTD Director Scott Bennett. “These projects will be funded with Federal-aid Safety funds at an estimated cost of \$74 million.”

Bids to install the first 92 miles of cable barriers will be received at the Department's letting scheduled for November 28th of this year.

Median crossover crashes occurring on our highways are some of the most hazardous and difficult types of crashes to predict. When vehicles crossover to opposing lanes of traffic, the risk of fatal and serious injuries is very high since vehicles are often striking head-on and drivers in the opposing lanes have little or no warning that a vehicle is coming from such an unexpected direction. There is often little time for evasive actions.

A before and after safety analysis of two projects that installed cable median barriers along Interstate 40 and Interstate 55 in Arkansas has revealed a significant reduction in fatal median crossover crashes. The Interstate 40 project location, located between Biscoe and Brinkley, had 10 fatal crashes in the 36 months before a cable median barrier was installed. In the 36 months after installation, the number of fatal crashes at the location dropped to zero. On Interstate 55, the number of fatal crashes dropped from two to zero after installation of a cable barrier. This substantiates multiple studies nationwide that report similar results.

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“Protecting motorists from a vehicle crossing the median is a high priority for the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department in their mission to provide safe highways,” Bennett adds. “It has been determined that cable median barriers are a highly cost-effective way to reduce the number and severity of median crossover crashes. The objective of this new program is to enhance safety and provide additional protection on our highways through the systematic use of cable median barriers on many Arkansas’ highways.”

Cable median barriers are designed to redirect vehicles striking either side of the barrier. They also require relatively little maintenance to restore its integrity and performance once struck by a vehicle.

The AHTD presently has cable median barriers in place on 37 miles of Arkansas highways. An additional 68 miles are currently under construction.

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