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Drivers encouraged to allow extra travel time at end of holiday weekend *I-10 westbound, between Phoenix & California, experiencing 10-mile backup*

PHOENIX —Travelers heading home on state highways to wrap up the holiday weekend are encouraged to allow extra travel time. The Arizona Department of Transportation says traffic backups can be expected approaching some existing work zones, although construction work will not resume until next week. Among the safety improvement locations where delays should be anticipated:

- Interstate 10 approximately 11 miles west of the State Route 85 junction west of the Phoenix area: A major bridge repair project at the Hassayampa River has required the closure of the westbound I-10 bridge. I-10 is limited to one lane in each direction using the eastbound bridge. Drivers are encouraged to allow at least 90 minutes of extra travel time due to busy traffic conditions. Drivers can consider US 60 through Wickenburg to connect with I-10 as an alternate. By Monday afternoon (Dec. 27), the westbound delay was approaching 10 miles (to milepost 111).
- State Route 87 between the Phoenix area and Payson: A highway widening and shoulder improvement project five miles north of the Bush Highway/Saguaro Lake turnoff (south of Sunflower) limits travel to one lane in each direction. Heavier traffic, especially in the southbound direction, should be expected.
- Grand Avenue (US 60) in the Phoenix region: New lanes were opened in late November between 83rd Avenue and Loop 101. However, an existing work zone with limited lanes remains in place between Loop 101 and Loop 303.
- Interstate 17 between Flagstaff and Phoenix: Although no major lane restrictions are in place, drivers are encouraged to allow extra travel time due to anticipated heavier traffic and be alert to changing weather conditions and snow expected later in the week.

ADOT reminds drivers to remember the following safe driving tips: Be patient, do not follow other vehicles too closely; obey speed limits, buckle up and never drive while impaired. Information about highway conditions is available on ADOT's Travel Information site at www.az511.gov or by calling 5-1-1. Specific information on the I-10 Hassayampa Bridge Project is available at www.azdot.gov/hassy.

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About the I-10 Hassayampa River bridge safety repair project: The \$3.9 million project to replace the aging bridge decks began in October. A new westbound bridge deck is scheduled to be completed in spring 2011. I-10 traffic will then be switched to the westbound bridge to allow crews to repair the eastbound structure. The entire project is scheduled for completion by fall 2011.

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