



News Release

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Surplus federal funds will advance projects to improve safety on Idaho highways

BOISE - The Idaho Transportation Board today approved a plan to use surplus federal funds on projects that will make Idaho's highways safer.

Idaho is receiving an additional \$21.7 million, and the money must be committed to projects by the end of September.

- \$15.3 million will fund the transportation department's programs to primarily maintain and build roads and bridges.
- \$5 million will be designated for safety efforts. Half of this will be distributed to local road departments.
- \$1.4 million will go toward the Transportation Alternatives Program, which funds projects for non-motorized transportation. The money will be required to address a safety issue or concern.

The projects will be paid for with funds provided by the Federal Highway Administration. Each year, the highway administration releases funds that were not used for federally eligible transportation programs and redistributes them to state transportation departments that qualify.

Safety is one of the transportation department's primary concerns, given that the number of vehicle crashes increased last year. Recent crash data shows that in 2015, fatal crashes increased 13.1 percent and fatalities increased 16.1 percent compared to 2014.

"The transportation department will use these funds to advance its mission of making highways safe," said Lee Gagner, the vice chairman of the Idaho Transportation Board. "Safety, in addition to mobility and economic opportunity, is a central goal of the department."

Potential safety projects that could receive the funds include traffic signals, warning signs, widening highway shoulders, adding guardrail, adding passing lanes and turnbays, adding rumble strips and bicycle/pedestrian improvements.

