

Westbound I-70 Twin Tunnels – July 2014

Construction Update

As of the end of June, blasting work inside the tunnel is more than halfway done with 59 of the estimated 80 tunnel blasts done. Outside the tunnel, crews are about 30 percent done with the rock face blasts. Although crews have performed more than half of the estimated 70 rock face blasts it will take to widen the westbound tunnel, some of the remaining blasts will involve removing larger amounts of material than did the initial smaller blasts.

Thus far crews have excavated about 550 feet of the tunnel and removed about 13,500 cubic yards of material. Outside the tunnel, about 6,200 cubic yards of material have been removed from the rock face walls above the westbound portal.

In efforts to minimize impacts on I-70 travelers, tunnel crews have been blasting in the early evening or early morning hours, while rock face blasts are typically done early to mid-afternoon. While some blasts had been done on Friday mornings up to this point, the typical increase in tourism means that as of July 1, I-70 traffic cannot be stopped between 9 a.m. and 8 p.m. on Fridays.

Because the blasting schedules can vary, everyone is encouraged to sign up for text or email alerts at

<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/CODOT/subscriber/new?pop=t&qsp=1851>

Summer construction activities

Along with blasting inside the tunnel and on the east and west rock face walls outside the tunnel, crews continue placing anchor bolts as they go to hold rocks in place above the tunnel and scaling loosened rocks and material when necessary following these rock face blasts. This periodic scaling work requires intermittently stopping I-70 traffic in both directions for up to 30 minutes while rocks are removed from above the highway. Delays to motorists can exceed 30 minutes, however, as it takes time for the traffic queues to clear.

In addition to this blasting and rock scaling work, crews are building the tunnel form liner structure adjacent to the highway. When the tunnel blasting work is complete later this summer, this steel structure will be used to place the 40-foot sections of concrete that will form the shape of the new tunnel. This form liner will be wheeled into the westbound bore on a set of rails once the westbound portal is wide enough to accommodate this three-story-tall structure.



While blasting work continues inside the westbound tunnel bore to widen it to about 53 feet, efforts outside the tunnel include putting together the form liner structure. This form liner will eventually be rolled into the tunnel and used to place the concrete that will create the shape of