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Stay.  
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PAGE 11A



End of the iPod?

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The Pueblo

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## FREEWAY CONSTRUCTION

# 'It's finally happening'



CHIEFTAIN PHOTO/BRYAN KELSEN

Colorado Department of Transportation Region 2 Director Karen Rowe addresses a crowd as Interstate 25 traffic passes behind her at Ilex Street on Wednesday morning. The gathering was a groundbreaking ceremony for the new interchange at Ilex.

## After years of planning, I-25 rebuilding work set to begin

BY PETER ROPER  
THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

Someday has finally arrived. Crews from Flatiron Construction are starting work this week on rebuilding Interstate 25 between the accident-prone Ilex interchange and City Center Drive in the heart of Pueblo. "We've been talking about this since the year 2000 but it's finally happening," City Councilman Bob Schilling said Wednesday as local officials, plus those from the Colorado Department of Transportation, gathered near Runyon Field to signal that work is getting underway. It's going to take two years to refurbish the freeway between Ilex Street and City Center Drive, but when it's done, there will be three lanes of traffic in both directions and four new but smaller bridges holding up the roadway.



*We've been talking about this since the year 2000 but it's finally happening.*

BOB SCHILLING  
CITY COUNCILMAN



And two important safety changes are being made:   
• The horrifically short entry lane from City Center Drive onto the southbound freeway will be replaced by a solid acceleration lane that will extend all the way to Ilex. Traffic will no longer stack up at the City Center interchange while drivers wait to jump into traffic.   
• Just as important, the tight 50 mph curve of the freeway at Ilex will be softened so traffic can take it at a higher but safer speed.

Scheduled completion date is October 2017. "This has taken two years of planning and it will take two years of construction," said Karen Rowe, the Region 2 CDOT director. "But this is the beginning of building a new freeway in Pueblo." CDOT officials said they will maintain two lanes of traffic in both directions at all times during the project. It was the summer of 2000 that CDOT contractors first unveiled

SEE FREEWAY, 2A

## FEDERAL PROBE

# Reach for the sky

Is airline collusion victimizing customers?

BY DAVID KOENIG,  
SCOTT MAYEROWITZ  
AND ERIC TUCKER  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — The U.S. government is investigating possible collusion among major airlines to limit available seats, which keeps airfares high, according to a document obtained by The Associated Press. The civil antitrust investigation by the Justice Department appears to focus on whether airlines illegally signaled to each other how quickly they would add new flights, routes and extra seats. A letter received Tuesday by major U.S. carriers demands copies of all communications the airlines had with each other, Wall Street analysts and major shareholders about their plans for passenger-

SEE COLLUSION, 2A



*We don't have to be imprisoned by the past.*

PRESIDENT  
BARACK OBAMA

## GLOBAL RELATIONS

# Coming in from the Cold War

U.S., Cuba take big step but walk fine line

BY JULIE PACE  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — After more than a half-century of hostility, the United States and Cuba declared Wednesday they will reopen embassies in each other's capitals this month, marking a historic full restoration of diplomatic relations between the Cold War foes. For President Barack Obama, the opening of the U.S. Embassy in the heart of Havana is one of the

SEE CUBA, 2A

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## TRAFFIC SAFETY

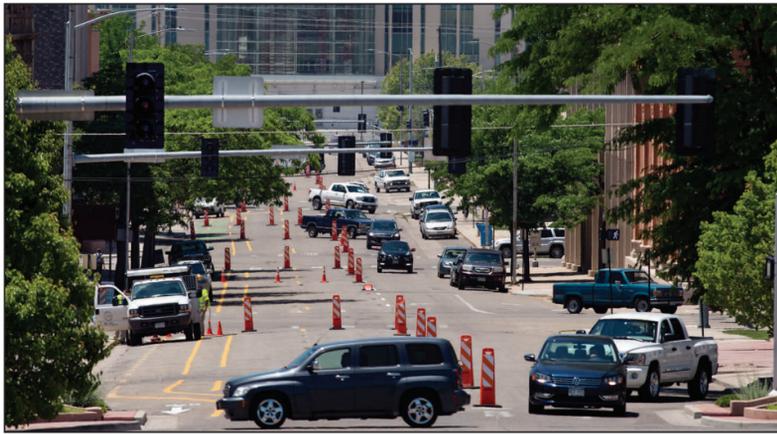
# Merchants fume over bike lanes

Council to get Fifth Street report

BY PETER ROPER  
THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

Business owners along Fifth Street gave Pueblo city traffic officials an earful Wednesday, making it clear they don't like the new dual bike lanes that are confusing their customers and costing them parking. "We've been reviewing our security cameras and there have been several close calls out there," Kristen Spicola, of the Board of Water Works of Pueblo, warned Pepper Whittle, who heads the city's traffic division.

The two-way bike lanes are a demonstration project on Fifth Street between Interstate 25 and the Dennis Maes Pueblo Judicial Building. While the dedicated bike lanes are one challenge for drivers, the design has also created a special parking lane a good 6 feet away from the curb — a novelty that local drivers are uncertain about using. "We see our customers just parking at the curb, in the bike lanes," said Lee Gladney, of Pueblo Bearing Service.



CHIEFTAIN PHOTO/FILE

Automobile traffic attempts to navigate the cone zones early last month as workers repaint the pavement for a two-way bike lane on Fifth Street in Downtown Pueblo.

"Somebody's going to get hurt out there," called another business owner. The Fifth Street project is largely being paid for by the health insurer Kaiser Permanente. Its consultant, Carlos Hernandez, was with Whittle to record all the criticism and suggestions. Whittle will be making a report to City Council and Hernandez

said all the criticism would be dutifully recorded. "This was just (expletive) poor management," said Steve Garcia, owner

SEE MERCHANTS, 3A

## Inside today

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## Rio Grande stand

A healthy living park in Alamosa has new life after a couple of grants were issued last week.

**SAN LUIS VALLEY, 10A**

## Driving force

Behind the wheel since he was a kid, this speed racer has stayed on track throughout his career.

**SPORTS, 1B**



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**88/60**

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