

# IMPULSE

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FOR YOUR INFORMATION

**Idaho Press-Tribune**

Nampa, Idaho

**Sunday Jan. 15, 2017**

**by Chuck Malloy**

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## **EDITORIAL: Potholes on I-84 are an embarrassment**

If state legislators want to put money back in the pockets of their constituents, we have an idea about how to do it in a big way, and we're confident that it would be a winner.

Fix those potholes on I-84 through Nampa.

The auto-repair business is booming now, thanks to those moon craters, but not in the way the shop operators had in mind. These deep potholes are knocking cars out of alignment, blowing tires and wearing out shock absorbers at a furious pace. Motorists (otherwise known as taxpayers) are shelling out hundreds of dollars in repair costs, if not thousands of dollars for repeat visits to the repair shops.

For those not living here, you know you're in 2C territory when you see a string of people on the roadside changing tires. As Idaho State Police Sgt. Matt Smith tells us, such a scene is a formula for serious injury or death. It's a wonder that the potholes themselves have not caused more highway deaths.

We know all about the daily adventures of hitting and dodging potholes. Tom Muncy of Nampa shared his story with us. He blew out two tires while slamming through a pothole on the Northside Boulevard exit ramp. He ended up spending \$500 to replace those tires and is glad that it wasn't worse. "Had I gone faster, I would have probably damaged the rims," he said.

The Idaho Transportation Department and Statehouse politicians, in typical fashion, are kicking the can down the road and wondering what to do. ITD has patched these potholes before, but they might as well have been filled with confetti. The winter blast has destroyed those roadway Band-Aids, and it will get a lot worse when warmer temperatures create more craters. ITD is looking at doing more patch-and-scratch, and legislators are pondering where to get the funding for repairs — while turning up the volume for more tax cuts.

C'mon, people. This is not an isolated country road where few vehicles travel. It's a major freeway that accommodates about 80,000 vehicles each day, and the speed limit is 65 mph. I-84 serves as an economic lifeblood for people going to-and-from work and for interstate commerce. Neither Canyon County, nor the State of Idaho, can afford to have I-84 turned into a daily demolition derby — or worse, shut down.

Most embarrassing, the Transportation Department had to shut down the interstate to repair the potholes. Traffic data show that nearly 80,000 vehicles travel in both directions on that stretch of I-84 on an average weekday. That's not just people going out to pick up a gallon of milk at the grocery store. Those are commuters trying to get to work on time. Those are state legislators trying to report for duty. Those are truckers hauling onions and potatoes to be processed and sold, shovels and ice melt to be delivered to local hardware stores, food to grocery stores and goods to department stores. Those are UPS and FedEx drivers delivering packages, couriers delivering important documents, ambulances delivering patients. You get the idea. This is important. You can't

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just shut down the interstate and cause such a disruption in commerce because the road is literally crumbling. This isn't a Third World country, is it?

Solutions are not easy, or cheap, but in the long run, taxpayers in this area — and the state — will benefit much more from a safe, reliable and well-maintained roadway than a tweak in the tax structure.

The solution starts with the Idaho Transportation Department and legislators doing their jobs and quit making lame excuses.

*Our editorials are written by Idaho Press-Tribune editorial writer Chuck Malloy and are based on the majority opinions of our editorial board. Not all opinions are unanimous. Members of the board are Publisher Matt Davison and community members David Beverly, Layne Bell, Claudia Swope and Marlene Jacobsen. Editor Scott McIntosh is a nonvoting member.*

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