

State approves \$14 million to repave I-84 west of Nampa

By IDAHO PRESS- TRIBUNE STAFF

Jan 18, 2017



Idaho Transportation Department and Idaho Department of Corrections crews fill potholes on Jan. 11 along westbound Interstate 84 between Nampa and Caldwell.

The state has fast-tracked a repaving project for a section of Interstate 84 in Canyon County after the deteriorating highway made headlines last week.

The Idaho Transportation Board on Wednesday approved \$14 million to repave a four-mile stretch of I-84 between Nampa and Caldwell that is riddled with potholes. The

money was set aside for a repaving project for next year, and the board approved moving it to this year's budget.

Even so, the project approved for a faster track Wednesday does not include resurfacing a three-mile section of the interstate in Nampa between Franklin Boulevard, at exit 36, and the Karcher interchange at milepost 33, a stretch also pocked with potholes and deep cracks during the recent cold, icy weather. An Idaho Transportation Department spokesperson could not be reached for comment Wednesday to explain why the resurfacing project does not include the three-mile section.

The state highway agency has been working to temporarily repair the potholes over the past week.

Construction will start this summer on a more permanent fix, ITD spokesman Jake Melder said. No date has been set.

"We're just excited that (the Transportation Board members) are able to get behind this and that they recognize the importance of making this construction happen as early as possible," Melder said.

The repave project will extend from the Franklin Road exit in Caldwell, milepost 29, and east to the Karcher interchange exit.

That 4-mile stretch of interstate was already scheduled to be repaved in 2018, but the repetitive periods of wet and freezing weather this winter caused the road condition to worsen, Melder said. ITD determines road repairs based on a classification system. The stretch of interstate in question reached the "very poor" stage this winter.

The temporary pothole-fixing operation was suspended late Tuesday because of the imminent winter storm. Crews can only fix the potholes when the roadway is dry, Melder added.

Westbound I-84 between Nampa and Caldwell was the worst and therefore fixes were made there first, according to ITD. Crews moved to eastbound I-84 Tuesday between the Franklin Road exit in Caldwell and the Karcher interchange exit in Nampa. The crews have about two days' worth of work to complete when the road dries out.

Caldwell Mayor Garret Nancolas said repairing Interstate 84 has been under consideration by transportation planning officials for as long as he can remember. He has served on the Executive Committee at the Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho, an entity responsible for regional transportation planning, for 19 years.

"I am very pleased that they have taken that step," Nancolas said of the decision made Wednesday. "Hopefully it will get us by until a complete rebuild can be accomplished in the future."

A stretch of the interstate between Centennial Way in Caldwell and Franklin Boulevard in Nampa is the No. 1 unfunded transportation priority, according to the COMPASS Communities in Motion Long Range Transportation Plan, which was adopted in 2014.