

State and Businesses Working to Keep Traffic Moving During an Emergency **Local News**

Posted by: David Haviland

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OLYMPIA ‐ With the memory of a flooded and closed Interstate 5 in the not too distant past, the Washington State Department of Transportation is prepared to keep freight moving when the next emergency threatens to close a key commerce corridor. In late December, WSDOT will complete a \$2 million project to install cameras, electronic message boards, and upgrades to road signs and the highway advisory radio signal along US 12 and State Route 7, the roadways used as an emergency detour for I-5 through Lewis County. The technology and signs are upgrades to WSDOT's [Commercial Vehicle Pass System](#) (CVPS), a way to move critical freight when major truck corridors are closed or severely restricted. The CVPS allows emergency managers to categorize and prioritize emergency and essential goods during major disruptions and closures, giving first priority to disaster relief supplies. "We designed the pass system in 2009 with I-5 in Lewis County in mind," said Barb Ivanov, director of WSDOT's Freight Systems Division. "We've been very fortunate that we haven't had to put it into use, but we know that emergency closures can happen any time and want to be ready."

After I-5 closed from flooding in 2007 and again in early 2009, WSDOT and the Washington Trucking Association, Washington State Patrol, Washington Emergency Management Division and Washington State Patrol developed the CVPS. Ivanov said WSDOT can modify the CVPS to work anywhere in the state when there is a multi-day highway closure on a priority freight route and there is an alternate route available. "I-5 is one of our state's primary freight routes, so it was important to have the cameras and signs on the road," she said. "But if we need to prioritize freight movement due to a long-term closure, we can put the CVPS into use for other freight routes too." Besides monitoring roadway and traffic conditions during emergencies, WSDOT will use the new equipment in Lewis County to monitor traffic and provide traveler information on a day-to-day basis, supplementing its [information available on the road](#) and the [WSDOT Traveler Information website](#).