



From the Director's Desk

State Senators in Garfield and Summit sponsor SB – 100 restricting Truckers on I-70

Call it the Left Lane Rule.

Late last year, transportation administrators began signage and enforcement on 12 miles through Glenwood Canyon that restricted tractor-trailers to the right lane. High country lawmakers are considering making it the law on I-70 from Glenwood Springs to C-470 at Golden with [SB24-100](#).



In December, [Colorado Public Radio](#) reported on actions by CDOT spurred by local leaders following multiple closures to clear truck accidents that closed the canyon. The article quotes Glenwood mayor Ingrid Wussow at length. Closures of Glenwood Canyon because of trucks driving too fast have been on the rise. Such closures are costly in dollars and time. An engineering miracle of the 1980s, the raised narrow corridor through that canyon has shoulders insufficient for the emergency stoppage, many blind corners, and just a couple of postage stamp spots for a disabled vehicle leaving little room for error, especially for semi-drivers. The lack of pullouts also makes it difficult for State Troopers to patrol and enforce for speed. Painted emblems on the pavement and signs clamped to jersey barriers every mile, or two now pummel truckers with reminders to slow down and drive on the right if they hadn't read the multiple reader boards headed into the canyon from either direction.

Restricting commercial travel for 12 miles for proven public safety purposes is small potatoes compared to what Senators Roberts, Velasco, and Will propose by extending the same restrictions from Glenwood Springs all the way to the exit for Red Rocks Amphitheater, reports the [Colorado Sun](#). Only a handful of segments of the Interstate have similarly constricted safety characteristics as the Canyon. Those locations are also known for the number of accidents: Dowd Junction, the Eisenhower and Johnson tunnels, bridges on Vail Pass, and the Floyd Hill area. The last two are being improved at vast public expense, [Vail Pass](#) (\$300 million) and [Floyd Hill](#) (\$700 million). CDOT puts a spin on the projects as building capacity, though the substandard engineering due to geologic challenges is at the root of both projects. CDOT has mile-by-mile records of accidents identified by cause mapped, so they are very clear about where design-oriented risk occurs.

It is easy to demonize truckers, but think about this:

"I finally found a job that pays a living wage. I'm driving a rig, behind schedule, short on sleep; I'm jacked-up on caffeine. It's snowing, but I'm throttling through to make time on my 50th trip over Vail Pass this



year. My tractor weighs between 10,000 and 25,000 lbs., two to five times the weight of your Chevy Silverado. The trailer I'm hauling was 35,000 lbs* yesterday, and this evening, it is 80,000 lbs**, or about the weight of the average small house. I trained as a truck driver and earned my CDL license for this job to make \$1,435/week***. Few other jobs in my county cover my family's bills each month. I deliver goods your family uses daily, and my pay depends on meeting my schedule, no matter the weather. I have a return trip to make early in the morning back over this pass. In your distracted driving, which can see from 8 feet above you, I watch as you cut in front of me so close I cannot see the back of your vehicle over my hood that

you have no idea of my stopping distance or heightened risk factor of any mistake I might make."

I'm reading "Dirty Jobs" by Eyal Press, which challenges our tendency to shift blame onto workers such as this truck driver and others who do work few others want to do. We tend to blame the individual for the accident or the crime instead of where the framework for those "dirty jobs" originate at the hands of a string of managers up to "elite" CEOs or public policymakers who made the decisions that are root causes, like placing more emphasis on profit over reasonable delivery schedules, safe working conditions, or better-engineered highways.

SB24-100 aims to restrict trucks to the right lane for 162 miles. Trucks can only drive in the left lane to pass each other if it passes. It is another interesting experiment in public policy.

*35,000 lbs. is the average weight of a semi-trailer load in the U.S. (J.D. Power)

**80,000 lbs. is the maximum legal weight of a semi-load on U.S. roads

***\$1,435/week average for CDL Truck Driver in Colorado (Zip Recruiter),

Salary.com lists trucker pay at \$57,992 per year or \$27.88 per hour.

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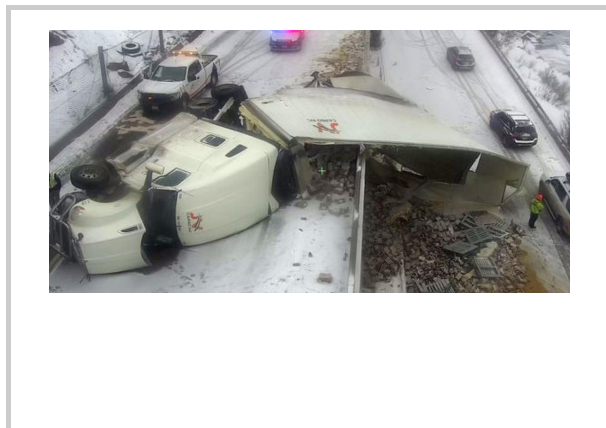
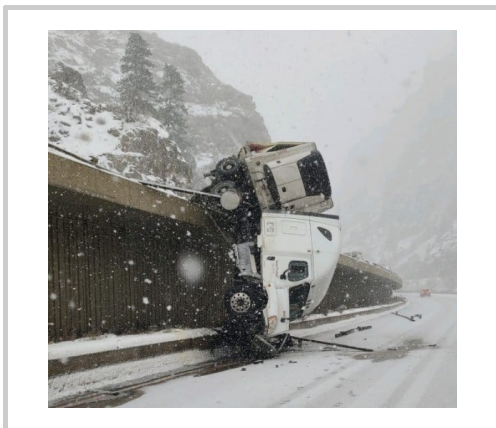


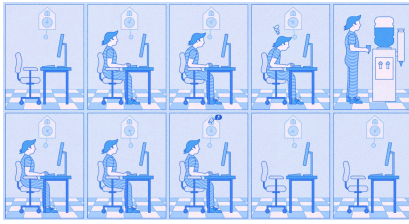
Photo Credits: CDOT

Interesting Reads on topics previously covered in NWCCOG Newsletters:

[VOX: What if public housing were for everyone?](#) Reports on Montgomery County in Maryland that builds public housing without income restrictions. The article focuses on what we recently shared about Gunnison County's strategy of retaining housing ownership through building equity for more housing. The Montgomery approach appears to mix families and seniors, and removing the income restrictions will likely remove some of the stigma on "public housing" from failed government projects from



the 1970s.



[NYT Wirecutter: You should take more breaks during work.](#) Here's how to make time for yourself. Suppose there are any managers out there who still believe chaining workers to their desks for 8 hours is productive. In that case, this article has many practical suggestions for resetting yourself throughout the day. I sent it around to our management team.

[HuffPost: As Lawmakers Debate Border, Immigrants Set to Add \\$7 Trillion to Economy.](#) Many "real" issues in the U.S. today and others are constantly hijacked by deeply partisan politics that get in the way of possible solutions. The border is a real issue that Congress has appeared poised recently to address but cannot during an election year. Meanwhile, immigrants brought to Denver are causing the city to make over \$180M in cuts to services such as Parks and Recreation and DMV Hours, according to [The Colorado Sun](#).



Weatherization to Energy Program - A 25 year Retrospective



Doug Jones, Energy Program Director, and Nate Speerstra, Energy Program Manager (pictured at left in 1999), embarked on their weatherization careers 25 years ago, marking the beginning of a transformative journey in energy conservation. From humble beginnings to navigating through economic fluctuations and technological advancements, their experiences reflect the field's evolution.

Speerstra's journey began as a stop-gap until something better came along. Still, as an installer, he felt the satisfaction of contributing to energy efficiency and comfort for homeowners, a feeling that influenced him to stay. Over the years, he witnessed significant changes in techniques and tools, from grainy Polaroid photos to high-tech assessments, highlighting the industry's progression towards precision and effectiveness.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) brought both challenges and opportunities, tripling staff levels before receding, prompting Speerstra and Jones to fortify their department against funding fluctuations. Through strategic diversification and a commitment to employee development, they ensured stability and expanded their reach to help more homes.

Their approach prioritizes hiring and nurturing talent, fostering a culture of support and growth. Speerstra's anecdote about conversing with a parrot underscores the memorable moments and the close-knit relationships formed within the communities they serve.

Beyond technical achievements, the Energy Program's impact resonates deeply within communities, saving lives through safety tests and enhancing comfort while reducing utility costs and environmental impact. Speerstra's expanded sense of community reflects the profound connections forged over years of service.

As the Energy Program transitions from Weatherization, the core mission remains unchanged: to empower communities through energy efficiency while fostering a sustainable future. Despite technological advancements and shifting landscapes, the intrinsic reward of improving lives and the environment endures—a testament to the unwavering commitment of Speerstra, Jones, and their team.

[Read the full story here.](#)

Look who's coming to dinner



In a tale that's part comedy, part wildlife saga, Pitkin County commissioners encountered a jaw-dropping revelation: a \$1 million price tag to deter trash-loving bears with electric and mesh fencing at the landfill. Should they yield to the shocking price tag, ushering in a new era of fortified defense against the Ursine insurgents? Or seek refuge in alternate strategies, dancing delicately between fiscal prudence and ecological equilibrium. [See the complete story here.](#)

Photo Credit: Tyler Carvell, Assistant Solid Waste Manager

Upcoming Board Meetings

Thursday, March 28, 2024: Full Council, EDD Board

Location: Zoom Conference Call, On-Site Location Silverthorne - Lunch provided

Time: Council 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., EDD Board 12:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Primary Agenda Items: approve January meeting minutes, approve List of Bills, program overviews, distribute electronic version of Member Handbook, review Council Rules of Conduct

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