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Northbound Fruitland Rest Area to Be Converted to Truck Parking

JANUARY 27TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Fruitland, Missouri - On Nov. 25, 2014, a fire at the northbound Fruitland Rest Area left the building unusable. The facility has remained closed since that time. The Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) will open the facility open Friday, Jan. 23 to primarily serve commercial truck parking.

"We looked at rebuilding the facility versus converting it to truck parking," said MoDOT Assistant District Engineer Matt Seiler. "The cost to rebuild the rest area, not including yearly maintenance contracts, would cost Missouri taxpayers more than \$115,000. We weighed that against the number of nearby private businesses offering 24-hour service to travelers. We feel converting the facility to truck parking is the best option for the taxpayers of Missouri."

Once fully converted, the site will offer more than 15 parking spaces for commercial trucks and vault restrooms. Until the vault restrooms are complete, portable restrooms will be available.

"Currently, the cost to maintain the Welcome Centers at Marston and Hayti, as well as the dual Fruitland facilities and northbound Bloomsdale rest area is nearly \$1,400,000," said Seiler. "Because of the reduced maintenance with the conversion to truck parking, we are negotiating new rest area cleaning contracts. Any additional cost savings to Missouri taxpayers will be spent to repair roads and bridges."

Missouri began constructing rest areas based on criteria established in 1968. At that time, rest areas were constructed to provide travelers with restroom facilities and a place to stretch their legs. With private businesses now providing these same opportunities and better built vehicles, the need for rest areas is not as critical today. But there is a growing demand for commercial vehicle parking.

"Parking space for commercial vehicles is a nationwide concern," said Seiler. "Commercial vehicles comprise approximately 30 to 35 percent of the average daily traffic on our interstates. More parking will help commercial vehicle operators meet their USDOT requirements to rest and will reduce the current, unsafe practice of parking on ramps."

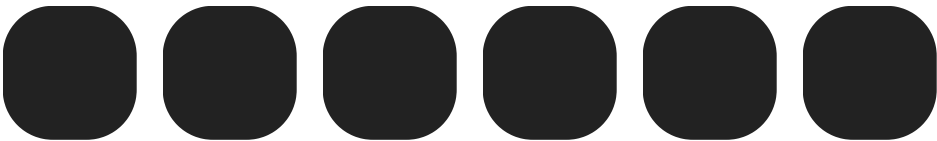
The Southeast District has previously converted four facilities to truck parking along Interstate 55. Those include the dual rest areas located in Steele, the northbound facility at Marston and the southbound facility at Bloomsdale. All feature parking for commercial vehicles and vault restrooms, while the Bloomsdale facility houses a weigh scale also.

For more information, contact Seiler at (573) 472-5340 or call MoDOT's Customer Service Center toll-free at 1-888-ASK-MODOT (1-888-275-6636).

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