

PRESS RELEASE

Gillette street project wins Wyoming Engineering Society (WES) President's Project of the Year award.

Reconstruction of Highway 59 (Douglas Highway) between I-90 and Donkey Creek won the 2008 version of this prestigious annual award given by WES for engineering or surveying projects utilized by and benefiting people of the State. The project applicants were WYDOT and the City of Gillette, co-owners of the project, and WWC Engineering, an engineering firm with offices in Sheridan, Laramie and Casper, who designed the project. The winning project, one of seven excellent entries this year, was announced at the 89th Annual Convention held February 6-7 at the Casper Parkway Plaza.



This highway is the busiest street in the State, and use is projected to grow to 45,000 vehicles per day by 2023. The challenge faced by the participants was to design a street that could carry the projected traffic, protect and enhance access to the numerous businesses in the project area, upgrade City water and electrical service and storm sewer, and extend the City's bike/pedestrian trail through the project area and under I-90, while enhancing the appearance of the area with a landscaped, raised center median and boulevard-style sidewalks lined with trees and grass. And to top it off, WYDOT and the City wanted to minimize inconvenience to the local businesses and the traveling public by limiting construction of this \$22 million project to one season.

The contractor, Concrete Works of Colorado, was offered a million-dollar bonus to complete the project by October 31, a bonus which was paid. Weekly press releases kept the traveling public aware of activities planned for the coming week so they could plan their trips accordingly.

Designing storm sewers in this area, which is situated in a topographic low that is difficult to drain, was a major challenge. Modifications had to be made to the Homestead Trickle Channel, which carries collected storm runoff from the west side of Highway 59 beneath the highway toward Donkey Creek.



The final road design includes 6 lanes of traffic separated by a raised, landscaped median, up to two left-turn lanes, and protected U-turns so I-90 as well as local

businesses can be accessed by traffic in either direction. This project represents WYDOT's first use of raised medians to control left turns and their first use of protected U-turns, more commonly found in larger cities such as Tucson, AZ. The computerized traffic signal system can be controlled from WYDOT's Cheyenne headquarters.

According to WYDOT District Construction Engineer Dave Mullen, the project was completed in one construction season, "...without a single change order due to errors or omissions in the plans and specifications." The complex and comprehensive project was said by Jim Evensen, Gillette's Public Works Director, to have "...greatly improved traffic flow on the busiest street in Gillette..." and "...will serve the community well for many years to come. It is an essential component to our overall transportation network."

