



Oregon Department of Transportation

NEWS RELEASE

Region 1 *Columbia, Washington, Multnomah, Clackamas
and Hood River Counties*

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OR 217 RAMP METER TO BE REACTIVATED

Monday, March 6, an Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) signal crew will reactivate the ramp meter on the ramp from northbound Oregon 217 to eastbound U.S. 26 (Sunset Highway). The ramp meter was installed in 1990 to control the flow of traffic merging from northbound OR 217 to eastbound U.S. 26. The signal has been shut off for the past two years while contractors widened and paved the lanes of U.S. 26 between OR 217 and the Sylvan interchange.

Traffic control monitoring

The reactivation of the OR 217 ramp meter is an effort by ODOT to improve traffic flow on eastbound U.S. 26 during peak travel periods. ODOT engineers will monitor traffic conditions to determine if the reactivation of the ramp meter improves travel times.

“We are bound by development and geography on the U.S. 26 corridor,” said Dennis Mitchell ODOT Region 1 Traffic Engineer. “We can’t add more lanes on U.S. 26 east of Oregon 217, so we have to look at other techniques to improve commute times. Metering the U.S. 26/Oregon 217 merge is one tool we hope can have a positive effect on the traffic conditions.”

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The SWARM system

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Visit the ODOT News Media Center at www.oregon.gov/ODOT/COMM

Once the northbound OR 217 to eastbound U.S. 26 ramp meter is reactivated, it will become part of the **System-Wide Adaptive Ramp Metering (SWARM)** program. The SWARM system is a traffic-responsive ramp metering program that uses traffic loop detectors embedded in the pavement to constantly monitor traffic conditions on area freeways. Based on the data it receives, the SWARM system can turn ramp meters on and off or adjust the red/green rates of the ramp meters. This data makes the ramp meters more sensitive to current mainline freeway conditions and therefore able to better control the flow of vehicles entering the freeway. This, in turn, reduces total expected traffic delay on the freeway corridor.

ODOT traffic engineers are working to implement the SWARM system on area freeways and highways. The system is already in use on:

- Both directions of Interstate 205 between the Glenn Jackson Bridge and Oregon City
- Both directions of I-84 between I-5 and I-205
- Both directions of OR 217 between U.S. 26 and I-5

The system will soon be active on:

- Both directions of I-5 between the Interstate Bridges and the Charbonneau interchange (Wilsonville)
- Both directions of U.S. 26 between I-405 and 185th Avenue
- Both directions of I-405 between the Fremont Bridge and I-5

The SWARM system is just one part of ODOT's ongoing effort to manage Portland's traffic congestion using advanced technology. As of February 2006, state-maintained highways in the Portland area contain 95 video cameras, 18 reader boards, 500 roadway sensor locations, and 137 ramp meters.

##ODOT##