



# *rest areas*

*When Missouri began constructing rest areas based on criteria established in 1968, they 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. Because of costs associated with updating and maintaining many of the older facilities, MoDOT has been converting some sites to meet the growing demand for commercial vehicle parking.*

*Missouri currently manages 18 rest areas along interstate highways, including 11 dual facilities (rest areas on both directions) in Mound City, Dearborn, Lathrop, Concordia, Boonville, Mineola, Wright City, St. Clair, Conway, Halltown, Marston and Fruitland. The other six locations include single facilities at Rock Port, Eagleville, Chain of Rocks, Joplin, Bloomsdale and Hayti.*

**Why is MoDOT converting some of the current rest areas to truck parking only facilities?**

Parking space for commercial vehicles is a nationwide concern. It is estimated that 30 to 35 percent of the ADT on interstate routes are commercial vehicles. Most commercial vehicle operators will park somewhere along their route for the required rest period. In addition to the rest area parking facilities, MoDOT recognizes that commercial vehicle parking demands will continue to increase. Because of this, commercial traffic is often forced to park on the deceleration and acceleration ramps, creating a safety hazard. Rather than abandon these sites, MoDOT has opted to convert the sites to truck parking to help meet the needs of commercial vehicles and decrease the renovation and upkeep costs associated with traditional rest areas.

Some of the current facilities, built many years ago, are in need of major renovations to adequately accommodate the average daily traffic (ADT). Prior to 2000, several of the rest areas were in poor condition due to lack of department emphasis, vandalism and outdated facilities. In 2000, each rest area received funds to address some of the major deficiencies. It was not the intention or expectation that this money would adequately renovate the rest areas for another 10 to 15 years of service. Some of those renovations include remodeling interiors, increasing lighting, improving heating, ventilation and air condition (HVAC) systems and replacement of fixtures. At the present time, many of the rest areas need updated waste water treatment systems to comply with the latest Environmental Protection Agency regulations. With all of the needed repairs, the department recognizes that this would only be a stopgap measure to a problem that will require a long term solution.

Daily cleaning of the rest areas has been a contracted service since the mid 1980s. Contracts are for a three-year period and provided for one crew to handle both sides of a dual facility by traveling back and forth between the two buildings and two crews during the summer months. While the renovations and increased hours of cleaning have increased, the cost of the contracts has also increased. In the Southeast District, contract costs for the rest areas are over \$710,000 per year.



There are USDOT regulations requiring commercial vehicle operators to periodically rest. By building new Welcome Centers and converting outdated facilities to truck parking MoDOT hopes to reduce driving fatigue and the current practice of parking on ramps, thereby resulting in a safer driving experience.

**Is this necessary for safety reasons?**

**Is MoDOT looking at converting more of the rest areas into truck parking?**

Yes. MoDOT has closed one on westbound I-44 which is about 20 miles from the next rest area in Oklahoma. Because we would not locate rest areas 20 miles apart within our state this was a natural site to convert to a truck parking only facility. In the Southeast District, MoDOT is looking at converting both the Fruitland rest areas into truck parking facilities with vaulted restrooms only. MoDOT selected this site because of the number of nearby private businesses offering 24-hour availability to travelers.

At the present time, three rest area facilities have been converted to truck parking, with the southbound Bloomsdale location being converted to a weigh scale with a vaulted restroom facility. The rest areas located in Steele have been converted to commercial vehicle sites featuring a vaulted restroom. MoDOT has plans to turn the northbound location at Marston into truck parking with the vaulted restroom as well. This conversion will take place in about one year.

**How many rest areas in Southeast Missouri have been converted to truck parking?**



**How much does it cost to maintain rest area facilities?**

The current cost to maintain the northbound Bloomsdale rest area, the southbound Marston Welcome Center and both Fruitland locations is over \$710,000 each year. If the Fruitland rest areas were converted to truck parking only, it would cost Missouri taxpayers about half of that amount.

MoDOT has worked with stakeholders to identify the current situation and put a plan together to address concerns. The primary concern focuses on the need to address the shortage of parking for commercial vehicles for extended periods of time to meet the requirements of the federal motor carrier guidelines. MoDOT has made the commitment where feasible and practical, to offer parking for the commercial vehicles at the rest area locations taken out of service (either by relocation of the facility or elimination). In some cases these sites may not be feasible if the area is affected by expansion of the interstate system, i.e. a new interchange or alignment change, or practical areas where ample truck parking is provided by private sources. With the conversion of the older sites to truck parking sites and the number of alternative stopping opportunities, MoDOT feels the above recommended spacing is appropriate. The additional parking spaces made available should encourage fewer commercial vehicles to park illegally on interstate ramps and entrance and exit ramps at rest areas.

**How has MoDOT identified which locations would be ideal for converting to truck parking?**

**Will this have an impact on businesses located along the interstate?**

MoDOT believes this will positively impact businesses located near the facilities converted to truck parking. Convenience stores and restaurants located near converted areas may see an increase in traffic to their stores.



MoDOT does not believe this will greatly impact the traveling public because of the availability of other facilities located near exits that are within 5 to 10 miles of the current rest area locations.

**How will this impact the traveling public?**



**How many rest areas are located in Southeast Missouri?**

Currently, there are two dual facilities located in Southeast Missouri located near Fruitland and Marston. There are two single locations at northbound Bloomsdale and northbound Hayti on Interstate 55. The department has plans to convert the northbound rest area at Marston into truck parking now that construction of the Hayti Welcome Center is nearing completion.

**For more information about the rest areas and Welcome Centers in Southeast Missouri, please contact our Customer Service Center at 1-888-ASK-MoDOT (1-888-275-6636).**