

321 Widening Project Gains Momentum

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Residents traveling Highway 321 south of Blowing Rock have probably noticed quite a bit of changes along the highway as construction crews continue to work to widen the road.

The Department of Transportation's Frank Gioscio told High Country Radio that once the blasting was completed on the northern section of the project, construction pace has picked up tremendously.

There are now two different sections of passing lanes on the northbound side of Highway 321. Gioscio said the first is about two miles long and is just north of the runaway truck ramp. The second is not as long and is just south of the fruit stands toward the northern end of the construction. Gioscio said a very short passing lane has also been put in on the southbound side of the highway near the fruit stands.

DOT officials continue to close the highway on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from noon until 2:00 p.m. Gioscio said the DOT also allows crews to close the highway from 7:00 on Monday evenings until 5:00 on Tuesday mornings, but now this is handled on a week-by-week basis because of the changing seasons and how quickly the sun goes down.

Gioscio said the project is expected to be completed by August of 2010.