

Ivanhoe exit closing produces few problems, FDOT reports

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JULY 6, 2015, 1:37 PM | COLLEGE PARK

The closing of the Ivanhoe Boulevard exit on eastbound Interstate 4 may not have been popular, but the Florida Department of Transportation now believes they successfully got the word out in advance about the closing ramp, leading to a smooth transition.

“What I’ve found in my years is if you knew it was going to happen, you might not like it, but at least you knew it was happening,” said Loreen Bobo, the construction program manager of the I-4 Ultimate project, which is spending the next six years on a massive construction effort to widen I-4 and add toll lanes in the middle.

On Sunday, June 21, the Ivanhoe Boulevard exit on I-4 was closed permanently.

Motorists are now being asked to take either Exit 85 (Princeton Street) or Exit 83A (Amelia Street).

Since it closed, Bobo said, traffic signs have directed motorists to the Princeton exit, and FDOT has been monitoring the traffic there to determine if additional adjustments should be made to handle the increased volume of cars.

“We actually had a message board before the ramp, saying the ramp is closing on this date,” Bobo said. “We had made adjustments to the Princeton exit prior to us closing Ivanhoe, in anticipation of the additional traffic on Princeton. We had folks watching the traffic patterns there, to see if it is backing up, if more people are turning right or turning left, and so on.”

Bobo said FDOT is anticipating that motorists who routinely used the Ivanhoe exit as part of their daily commute are making the necessary adjustments without incident.

“We’ve still watching to see things like, are people figuring it out, is it safe, those types of questions,” she said.

“And we are looking at making some more adjustments to the signage at I-4 that might direct folks to (State Road) 50 as well as to Princeton. Right now we’re just directing them to Princeton.”

So far, there have been no problems reported due to the ramp closure, Bobo added, and she attributed that to the work FDOT did in advance of it.

“Our goal is to inform as many people as possible that something is going to happen,” she said. “It’s always been something that’s very important to us. We have a weekly lane closure/ramp closure notice that goes out, and it’s been in that. We feel that we tried to get the information out as much as possible, but there will always be someone that missed that message.

“But in the last week and a half,” Bobo added, “I don’t know that we got a lot of calls from people saying they didn’t know it’s going to happen. The bigger question for us was what is the impact on Princeton and State Road 50.”

Bill Jennings, who chairs the College Park Neighborhood Association’s Historical Committee, noted that the closing of the Ivanhoe Boulevard exit ramp has been talked about since 1998 and was no surprise.

Most College Park residents, he added, knew it was about to happen, and adjusted accordingly.

“I knew that exit was going to be closed in 1998, and that decision was made official in 2002,” Jennings said.

“When it was discussed, people saw pictures and maps and drawings of it, and it was kind of a ho-hum thing.”

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