

PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release:

Friday, February 24, 2017

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Interstate 16 Safety Enhancement Project Begins Next Week

SAVANNAH – On Monday, the Georgia Department of Transportation will begin a two-year safety enhancement project along portions of Interstate 16 starting at the Candler/Emanuel County line and continuing into Chatham County at Pooler Parkway.

Georgia DOT, in collaboration with the Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC), is implementing an environmentally sensitive program to remove dense tree and bush overgrowth on state right of way.

The scope includes 465 acres of vegetation management within I-16 medians, as well as at interchanges.

The vegetation removal efforts will help the Department meet public demand for a safer roadway, while also enhancing aesthetics throughout the corridor from mile 95.5 to Exit 155. Pooler Pkwy?

Right-of-way reclamation will restore sight distance along large portions of I-16 and allow Georgia DOT to expand its cable barrier program along the corridor.

“As we strive to improve safety along the I-16 corridor, it is important that we expand the recovery zone for vehicles that may leave the roadway so that the likelihood of an errant vehicle striking a fixed object is greatly reduced,” stated Georgia DOT District Engineer Brad Saxon. Also, as evidenced following Hurricane Matthew, fallen trees and debris hindered re-entry efforts along I-16 to the evacuated areas on the coast. Effective vegetation management will help improve the re-entry time of emergency and essential personnel following a major weather event,” Saxon noted.

The project reinforces Georgia DOT’s goal of improving safety first and foremost, but also establishing a clean, green and well-maintained roadway, while leveraging state partnerships to maximize agency resources. Safety enhancement benefits of the project include:

- Reducing trees and bushes within rights of way to safeguard motorists and provide adequate room for vehicle recovery if someone leaves the roadway;
- Ensure the visibility of warning, information and instructional signs;
- Remove overhanging trees and/or branches that may fall onto the interstate and state routes during inclement weather;

The three-phases are tree removal, stump grinding and soil stabilizing plantings made up of pollinator gardens and grasses for hay. As part of GFC's Best Management Practices, Streamside Management Zones have been established and will remain untouched to protect all state waters within the limits of this project.

Motorists can expect weekday lane closures during daylight hours generally in the eastbound travel lanes with a few locations in the west bound lanes. These lane closures will be utilized for safe entry and exit of heavy equipment vehicles.

The public is urged to use extreme caution in the work zone areas. As the projects progress, further work zone location updates will be provided. Be sure to follow us on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/GDOTSouthEast>) and Twitter ([@Georgia DOT-Southeast](https://twitter.com/GeorgiaDOTSoutheast)).

Every day Georgia DOT employees work on roadways in close proximity to travel lanes. Whether they're in maintenance, in construction or are HEROs, it's dangerous. Fifty-eight Georgia DOT personnel and many more motorists, passengers and contractors' workers have been killed in work zone crashes since 1973. When you drive in a work zone, obey the rules: Pay Attention - Slow Down - Watch for Workers. It can make the difference between life and death. Visit www.dot.ga.gov/DS/SafetyOperation/Workzone.