

Comments for:  
Truck Traffic Safety Issues - Madison County

## Highway Corridors

12/1/09

All mileage and time considerations dealing with long haul semis should originate in Idaho Falls. That is where the semis decide whether to go on the Interstate, on 87/287 or on 191. Jim Lynch, MDOT, used corridors originating at the Montana border (Monida Pass, Targhee Pass, Raynold's Pass) and ending at Three Forks. The long haul semis do not originate at the Montana border when deciding to take these three corridors, Interstate I5, Mt. 87/ US 287 or US 191. They originate in Idaho Falls. The majority are not ending their trip in Three Forks. They are going to major hubs in state or to other states or Canada.

The towns you must use in corridor comparisons are Bozeman if trucks are going East and Helena if trucks are going North.

### Long Haul Semi Options from Idaho Falls:

1. Destination East of Bozeman – ID 20 to MT 87/287 to 84 at Norris to Bozeman
2. Destination East of Bozeman – Interstate I5, through Dillon on 55, to Interstate 90 East to Bozeman
3. Destination East of Bozeman – ID 20 to West Yellowstone to 191 to Bozeman
4. Destination North of Helena – ID 20 to 87/287 to Three Forks North to Helena
5. Destination North of Helena – Interstate 15 to Butte, Interstate 90 East (approx. 5 miles) then Interstate 15 to Helena

All long haul semis originating at Idaho Falls and going West would use Interstate 15 to Interstate 90 West.

All long haulers using the Madison Valley (87/287) are going East or North (Options #1 & 4)

### Consider This:

If you restrict long haul semis from 87/287, if they used 191 you would have fewer long hauls using 191 because you'd eliminate most semis going North. Most long hauls using 191 would be going East from Bozeman.

You are cutting long haul semis on Idaho 20 and 191 because most trucks going East, whose destination is East of Bozeman, are going to use Idaho 20 and 191.

The majority of long haulers using 191 going South from Bozeman are coming from the East. You are eliminating the North traffic as a factor on 191.

Due to a low population density in the Madison Valley, it is not a major long haul destination. Even if the semis are short hauling to Bozeman, it is more economical to use 191 from Idaho Falls.

### Time and Mileage Chart

	Practical		Shortest	
	Miles	Time	Miles	Time
Option #1	210.4	5:23	same	
Option #2	262.3	5:08	same	
Option #3	202.3	5:04	same	
Option #4			265.6	6:34
Option #5	281.8	4:53	same	

Going East, the shortest mileage route by 8.1 miles is through Hwy 191 (Option #3)

Going North, the shortest mileage route by 16.2 miles is 87/287 (Option #4)

Going East, the shortest time route by 4 minutes is Hwy 191 (Option #3)

Going North, the shortest time route by 1 hour and 41 minutes is Interstate 15 (Option #5)

Trucks consider four parameters:

1. Time
2. Cost (mileage)
3. #of weigh stations – if there are no weigh stations, the trucks do not have to stop (adding time) and they will not be cited (costing them money) for infractions or being overweight
4. Enforcement for speed limits and other traffic violations

Long haul semis may save all four ways going through the Madison Valley. Even though the time is longer, based on them traveling the speed limit which is less than the Interstate and 55 at night, they consistently exceed the speed limit to make time (time is money). They save on mileage. They save by not having to stop at weigh stations therefore they can be overloaded to make more money on the trip. There is admittedly a consistent lack of appropriate enforcement, especially at night.

MDOT and Jim Lynch are protecting the trucking industry by allowing them to break the law. He is encouraging them to break the law by not installing a permanent weigh station on 287 similar to Four Corners that checks logs, weights and safety features of the trucks, and by not adding more speed enforcement personnel. If the Governor condones Mr. Lynch's method of operation, then the Governor is complicit in this practice and is putting the citizens of Montana at risk in an unlawful and unsafe area. MDOT and the State of Montana need to be held accountable for these actions.

The Madison Valley will not wait to become a crash corridor, a designation that 191 earned with excessive long haul semi truck traffic on roads unsuited for them and the rest of the traveling public. Interstate 15 is equipped to handle semis safely and efficiently and long haul semis should be routed to that interstate.

*Patricia  
Mayer*



Co. Form

NOV 24 2009

Project name: U.S. HWY 287 - Truck Safety Issues - Madison County  
Control Number: No Control #  
Meeting date and time: Monday, November 16, 2009 6:30 p.m.  
Location: Ennis High School Gymnasium, 517 Charles St., Ennis MT

DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION  
BUTTE, MONTANA 59701

You are invited to make your comments on this form and place it in the comment box located at the sign-in table or take it with you and mail it to Jeff Ebert, Butte District Administrator, MDT Butte district office, at PO Box 3068, Butte, MT 59702-3068. Comments may also be submitted by fax to (406) 494-4396 or online at [www.mdt.mt.gov/mdt/comment\\_form.shtml](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/mdt/comment_form.shtml)

The deadline for comments is <date>.

Please indicate your name, address and affiliation (if any) below. Thank you for your interest in and comments about this project. Please use the back and/or additional sheets of paper if necessary.

Name and address (Include physical address & email address, please):

JAN Coffman  
Box 994 809 Passamaci St  
ENNIS, MT 59729

Comments: I would like to see the weight station ~~was~~ be a building open 24/7

Slow the trucks down just on main St



Comment Form

NOV 24 2009

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DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION BUTTE DISTRICT OFFICE BUTTE MONTANA 59701

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Please indicate your name, address and affiliation (if any) below. Thank you for your interest in and comments about this project. Please use the back and/or additional sheets of paper if necessary.

Name and address (Include physical address & email address, please):

Tom Pruitt  
104 1st Street  
Alder, MT 59710      tomp@3RIVERSdbs.NET

Comments: I WAS UNABLE TO ATTEND THE MEETING IN ENNIS BUT I DO HAVE A QUESTION AND COMMENT. I HAVE LIVED IN THE AREA FOR TEN YEARS (7 IN ENNIS, 3 IN ALDER) THE AMOUNT OF TRUCK TRAFFIC HAS INCREASED VERY DRAMATICALLY OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS. ~~With~~ With the amount of interest in this increase it seems funding could be provided from some special pot to RUN CAMERON WRIGHT STATION 24 hours a day 7 days a week for say THREE MONTHS. How ABOUT ARRA FUNDS OR GRANT MONEY? My second comment has to do with the fixed nature of the roads. They have not changed over the last ten years, so why didn't the truck drivers recognize

the benefits of using US 287 through ENNIS  
TEN YEARS AGO? A couple of RESIDENT truck  
DRIVERS from this AREA tell me it is the  
lack of a SCALE IN IDAHO & MONTANA when  
truck utilize this route.

Thank you.

Tom Pruitt



Comments

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NOV 18 2009

DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION  
BUTTE MONTANA 59701

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Name and address **(Include physical address & email address, please):**

Maria Lake

39 Gravelly Range Rd.

Ennis, MT. 59729

mlake@bankingonthefuture.com

Comments:

Thank you for making the concern of some a priority for MDT and for your earnest research & the presentation of your results.

Your proposed improvements in signage, patrols, check points, etc. appears to be appropriate given the situation. I

complement you on the manner in which the meeting of 11/16 was conducted.

MDT's continued communication & dialog with The Madisonian is essential to the

success of each & every effort you put forward from this day forward. It will be

the only factual accounting/reporting of all of the resolutions offered at last → fwd

night's meeting. Each and every effort needs to be recognized publicly and I can think of no better or other method than the local press. Please keep your proposed solutions on the front burner & provide them to this community just as soon as is reasonably possible.

Sincerely,  
Maria Lake

Dear Jeff Covert,

Nov, 4, 2009

To Whom this may concern,

Please stop the LongHaul Semi's from using  
Idaho 20, 87, mt 87, US 287 from Idaho  
Falls to Three Forks, mt!

Please listen to the people of the  
area, also the Western Governor's Assoc.  
drafted Resolution 07-01. "Protecting  
Wildlife Migration Corridors &  
Crucial Wildlife Habitat in the West."

Have a permanent 24/7 weigh  
station opened and manned at  
all times to deter trucks that  
haul against Regulations.

Speaking for all fish & other species in  
the Madison River... and all mammals  
who also live here!

Sincerely,  
Donna Jones  
PO Box 1 ENNIS MT. 59729

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NOV 23 2009

Who Do They Work For?

DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION  
BUTTE, MONTANA 59701

November 18, 2009

Jim Lynch, Director of Montana Department of Transportation, conducted a Community Highway Safety Forum on Monday, November 16<sup>th</sup> in Ennis. This was his response to the several hundred citizens in the Madison Valley who are frustrated with the long haul semi truck traffic that has been detoured from Hwy 191 during its safety construction. Mr. Lynch is ignoring our problem and trying, with his skewed statistics, to say there is no problem. How can this be if all the long haul semi traffic is prohibited from using 191 and was originally directed to use Idaho 20, 87, Mt. 87 and US 287, thereby bringing those unsafe conditions to our Valley? He has also directed the MDT staff to tell the 500 people who have inquired, that MDT is considering whether or not to allow long haul semis back on 191. The rumor, not based in fact, is that the Yellowstone Club has put pressure on MDT to restrict semis from the Gallatin valley, Hwy 191, in order to make it easier for prospective buyers to come up to their development and buy their lots. At the latest meeting, Mr. Lynch made a concerted effort to compare and contrast Hwy 191 and Hwy 87 and 287 without really considering the Interstate. He is making a case to say the Madison Valley is a safe place for semis and Hwy 191 is not. We strongly disagree that the Madison Valley should become the next two lane truck interstate and in the following examples, we refute his contention that 287 is safer than 191 or the Interstate 15.

The packet he passed out shows the **Corridor** of his study to be from Idaho to Three Forks which of course is going to show US 287 as the shortest route. Is Three Forks a hub of long haul pickup and deliveries? I doubt it. Rather he should have used Bozeman or Butte as the Corridor destinations.

His **road grade map** shows that 287 and the Interstate 15 are similar as far as the number and percentage of grades, (in the parallel routes) except for one 11% grade on I 15. There is only one small grade on 191.

There are 61 **No Passing Zones** on 87 and 287; 47 no passing zones on 191.

His **speed chart** shows speeds up to 77 mph in the Valley. Residents have had semis pass them at 75 mph.

His **Truck Crash** chart is averaged from 1999 to 2008 to show more crashes on 191. Construction on 191 started in June 16, 2008. Before that Madison Valley did not have hundreds of trucks per day therefore did not have a crash problem.

The same goes for his **Wild Animal – Vehicle Collision** chart where obviously there was more traffic on 191, therefore more collisions. These are also

*reported* collisions. Semis who hit animals as a rule do not report unless there is insurable damage to their truck and heavy grills and bumpers preclude that.

His **Animal Carcass Data** is averaged from 1998 to 2008, not the time we had the influx of semis. His chart also states "The MDT animal carcass database is an opportunistic collection and reporting database – not all incidents are recorded. The data is not statistically valid...".

His chart on **Passenger Vehicles vs. Trucks in Ennis** is for a two day period, May 12 and 13, 2008 when a mobile weigh station was open. Believe it or not, when semis know there is a weigh station open, they will avoid it for a variety of reasons: the time it takes to stop, possible overweight violations, incorrect logs, safety violations or just because they don't want to be hassled. They will CB other trucks and we have seen trucks on the side of the road waiting until the mobile stations close. These statistics are not a fair representation of the truck traffic in Ennis.

The **Truck Crashes** chart is irrelevant for dates prior to the construction detour; however, if you take the graph and work on the percentages they show a steady and dramatic increase in crashes in the Madison Valley from 2006 to 2008.

287 vs. 115	2006	2007	2008
	5/43 = 11%	13/45 = 29%	9/30 = 30%

287 vs. 191	5/25 = 20%	13/22 = 59%	9/15 = 60%
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Then, in his **Clarifications** section, he goes on to refute the *verifiable* statistics that our grass roots group has compiled, basically calling us liars. I take offense to this unprofessional and unproductive tact by Mr. Lynch. All of the statements we make are only taken from verifiable sources, many from the MDT website and archives. We do not make up these statistics. The Interstate is a safer way to travel (for all vehicle types) than a US or State Highway, according to the MDT statistics.

His statement that MCS has increased **enforcement** may be true; however, it did not happen until our group forced the issue and it certainly did not happen when the detour was announced in June '08. 296 hours scheduled for June 08 to Oct. 09 (3600 hours) would be .08% enforcement. If 73 vehicles were in violation in 296 hours, that translates to 900 possible violations in 3600 hours. That is an unacceptable safety statistic that our citizens are dealing with daily in the Madison Valley.

Regarding the safety of the **Ennis and Twin Bridges intersection**, according to the Madison County Pre-Mitigation Plan, they are two of the most dangerous intersections because of the amount of traffic (up to 800 trucks per day), and the configuration of the intersection making it necessary for 18 wheelers to swing wide on turns.

All **hazardous materials** trucks banned from 191 are going through the Madison Valley unless they are using the Interstate which is where they should be. We know hazardous materials deliverable to Madison Valley is exempt.

As far as the **Animal Carcass Counts**, we are working with statistic fact finding institutes, environmental organizations, the Highway Patrol and the citizens of the valley to compile our own count. The MDT counts, as stated above, are not statistically valid by their own admission. The Madison Valley is one of the most important migration routes to Yellowstone National Park. It must be preserved and that cannot be denied.

It appears to me that Jim Lynch, the director of transportation for ALL citizens in this state, is making a case to disallow long haul semis from the Gallatin Canyon, Hwy 191, and use our Madison Valley as an alternate route. His direction to public inquires about why 191 is not open now is that it is not safe because the chip sealing has not been completed and that MDT is reconsidering whether through semi truck traffic will be allowed on 191 once he determines construction is complete. The fact is, construction is complete except for some seeding of banks, and all of the other 80 plus road constructions or reconstructions in the state that have not been chip sealed are allowing all types of vehicles including semis to use those roads. Why not Hwy 191? Why does Jim continue to say the Madison Valley is safer and better for semis than Hwy 191? Why doesn't he acknowledge the Interstate 15 is the safest route? This is just speculation on my part, but could it be that the very powerful money in the Gallatin has turned Jim Lynch into a Director of the Elite instead of the Director of all the Citizens of Montana? It is apparent that the safety and well being of the citizens in the Gallatin Valley and Big Sky exceeds that of the citizens of Madison Valley and Ennis. Strap on the boxing gloves, Mr. Lynch, if that is the way you want to play. Just try to play fair, listen to our concerns, acknowledge the problem and after 5 ½ months of this dangerous situation, enact all of those **Future Considerations** now, not in the future.

Sincerely, Patty Mayne



# Comment form

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**Name and address (Include physical address & email address, please):**

DUANE L. LEACH 264 SHINING MOUNTAIN LOOP ROAD, ENNIS MT ~~59707~~ <sup>59729</sup>  
MAIL: P.O. BOX 1574 ENNIS, MT 59729 EMAIL: BROTHNERBEDE@YAHOO.COM.

Comments: <sup>WONDERFUL</sup> IT IS ~~AMAZING~~ TO KNOW THAT MDT HAS SUCH COMPREHENSIVE DATA. YOU ARE DOING A SUPERIOR JOB OF MAINTAINING AN OUTSTANDING HIGHWAY SYSTEM.

THOSE WHO ARGUE AGAINST TRUCKS HAVING ACCESS TO HIGHWAYS THAT THEY HAVE A RIGHT TO USE ARE SELF INDULGENT PEOPLE, ~~THEY~~ <sup>THEY</sup> ARE ONLY WILLING TO SEE THE WORLD FROM THEIR SELFISH PERSPECTIVE. THEY REALLY DO NOT WANT TO LIVE IN THE REAL WORLD.

December 7, 2009

Jeff Ebert  
Butte District Administrator  
P.O.Box 3068  
Butte, MT 59702-3068

Mr. Ebert,

I was not in attendance at the November Ennis forum but I did get a copy of the transcript and an audio of the presentation. It was very much the same as the first forum and the tone of his presentation, the same.

I have sent a letter to the Ennis Blog site and also sent it to our Governor. I will attach it to this letter as well.

To add to my letter, I want to point out that it is common sense that the Madison Valley is now having trouble with trucks, since all the trucks were rerouted to 287 from 191 and according to DOT, they may never go back on 191.-----To be determined by the director at the completion of the construction on 191. So the DOT has transferred the problems of 191 to 287 instead of correcting the problem by rerouting the trucks to I-15.

The statistics Mr Lynch presented were all from 1998 through 2008. The Madison Valley didn't have a significant problem until 2008 when the trucks were rerouted from 191 to 287. So basically, the statistics were not valid for our problem. Under Clarifications, perception claimed :53% of trucks traveling across Montana go to other states or markets. Actual: the study shows 25% go to other states. The problem with this is it is not specified what size truck. We are only concerned about the long haul semi trucks. I question if smaller trucks were included in this. Several of my friends who having trucking business in the Madison Valley are upset because they are being pulled over and inspected and weighed. The emphasis was to be on long haul semis but it seems local small trucks have been targeted. Another clarification is the number of hours scheduled for MCS enforcement weekly. This must have been 1 particular week as the number of vehicles checked, weighed, inspected can not be the same every week. I think 11 drivers being placed out of service, 7 vehicles being placed out of service and 50 citations issued in one week is very significant. These were statistics for one week. If this enforcement was happening on a regular basis, I guarantee you, the truckers would no longer go through the Madison Valley with violations because they would believe the chances of getting caught was probable. The frequency of these inspections are so infrequent that truck drivers are willing to take the chance. In a paper titled "The Importance of Commercial Vehicle Weight Enforcement in Safety and Road Asset Management" published in Traffic Technology International 2000, I quote, "As a result, it is generally agreed that the overloading violation rate is a function of enforcement visibility. We know that where enforcement is visible, and continuous,

overweight violation rates are quite low (typically around 1% for continuously operated weigh stations on the US Interstate System." In table 1 of that same report, Overweight Violation Rate across State Agency: Montana High Enforcement Level Violation Rate is 1%. Montana Low Enforcement Level Violation Rate is 29%.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my opinions,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tricia Stabler', with a large, stylized initial 'T'.

Tricia Stabler  
1244 Hwy 287 N  
Cameron, MT 59720

RECEIVED

DEC 10 2009

DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION  
BUTTE, MONTANA 59701

November 18, 2009

Dear  Governor Schweitzer and the Montana Board of Transportation,

On November 16 I attended a meeting at the Ennis High school put on by Jim Lynch, MDOT regarding the long haul semi traffic on HWY 287 through Ennis. This meeting came about because of the work that myself, Patty Mayne and Trish Stabler have been doing in the valley and a meeting we had with MDOT (Jim Lynch) in June.

Jim came with a lot of facts, surveys, posters, etc. He had a power point presentation and delivered a very long program.

His surveys and facts were on the various highways comparing I15, 287 and 191 from 1998/99 through 2008. These showed that the least amount of semi accidents and animal collisions were on 287. What he didn't point out is that 287 didn't have the heavy semi traffic on it until MDOT rerouted the trucks on June 16, 2008 because 191 was under construction.

He based all his truck surveys on a 24 hour study that MDOT in May of 2009.

When asked to point out where the weigh stations were on I15 (there are 3), 287 (there are 0) and 191 (there is 1), he said he didn't know. He didn't even know one of MDOT's "speed counters" that he used for his study, was positioned ¼ mile from the stop sign where hwy 287 and 87 meet and the truckers turn there.

When he was asked why the sign in Idaho had not been moved to the junction of 20 and I15 (where the trucks would turn to use I15) like the Governor had promised in a meeting with him earlier this fall, he did not know of any sign in Idaho rerouting trucks.

Jim then went on to say that MDOT supports the Western Governors Association. But in their statement, where it clearly states: Resolution 07-01 recommended on page 7 #8 (1) "Western Governors should consider developing and expanding programs to reduce traffic volume. Methods used to reduce traffic volume include rerouting or focusing traffic on highways less impacting to wildlife." The WGA's didn't mean that, he went on to say "they really didn't mean removing trucks (semi's) just making the routes safer and easier to use".

Needless to say, a good majority of the people attending the meeting got up and walked out. One person walking by said "we're just being whitewashed".

Jim did admit there was a problem; "yes you have a lot of trucks and you better get used to them, there will be more". Obviously Mr. Lynch, a former trucker himself, is very pro semi. He comes across as not caring at all about the communities, people, wildlife and economics' in Montana. Once again it seems we have never left the "good ol' boys Montana politics. He even suggested we should open up a truck stop on 287 to support the truckers.

We are not referring to the Montana truckers, the cattle haulers that support our valley, the hay carriers, and the local delivery, as Mr. Lynch and Spook from the Montana Carriers Association keep trying to bring up. We are asking that the long haul out of state semi's be moved to I15, the safest route for that volume of semi traffic.

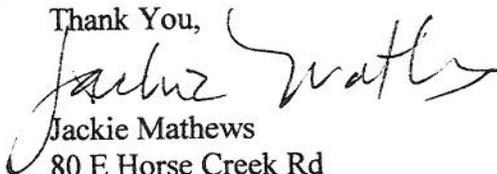
The Madison valley is one of two valleys left in the COUNRTY that still has an intact migration route through it. We are home to three endangered species (wolverine, grizzly bear and wolves). The second longest antelope migration in this COUNTRY happens in this valley. The Madison River is THE most used river in the STATE and brings in millions of dollars of revenue for all of southwest Montana each year. Over 50% of the valley is under conservation easements leaving our valley one of the very few with "large amounts of OPEN Space and yet we have a major truck route right through the middle of it. The town of Ennis has outdoor cafes and WAS a wonderful, sleepy tourist town with a ranching flare. The over 600 semi trucks per day (via MDOT Counts) are ruining this. Just the safety issues of this amount and growing truck traffic through this valley should bring you pause.

I have just learned from a MDOT employee working on the hwy 191 project, (they asked to remain anonymous as they didn't want to lose their job) that there is no engineering reason why 191 is not open to all traffic. There are other hwys in this state that haven't been chipped sealed and they are open to all traffic. They were told to keep the highway closed till the chip seal was done and then the Department Director would make the decision whether to open the road to truck traffic or not. They have also received a lot of calls from long haul truckers complaining they can not use 191 the truckers say that the cost of using 287 and I15 is \$100.00 more and it takes at least one hour longer. I have two questions for you governor, 1. How can MDOT designate a road semi free, and if they can why does Mr. Lynch keep telling us he can not? 2. If economics of the long haul truckers are so important to MDOT and the cost of all our goods, as Mr. Lynch keeps telling us, why isn't this road open? Is this another case of "Good Ol' Boy Montana Politics"?

Once again we are asking you for help to solve this issue to the benefit of the people in Montana and the Madison valley. We ask that the weight station be manned outside of Cameron on HWY 287 each day and night; we will help find funds for additional MDOT people if needed. We ask that Montana Highway Patrol be present in this valley each day and especially during the night hours when these trucks travel through this valley. And finally, as the Governor promised, the signs instructing the semis' to use I15, be moved to the proper locations: i.e. the junction of HWY 20 and I15 in Idaho Falls ID where the trucks would have to turn to use I15. And, that they say to USE I15 until this issue can be resolved.

By MDOT's posters it is obvious that Montana is THE truck route state, I like a lot of my neighbors feel that they should be kept on the Interstates not routed through the rural communities. I look forward to hearing from you soon and working WITH you to solve this problem.

Thank You,



Jackie Mathews

80 E Horse Creek Rd

Cameron, Mt 59720 406-682-3038

## Madison Valley, Long Haul Semi Trucks, Citizens, and Politicians.

I've been reading, and thinking about the material provided by MTDOT at the forum in Ennis on November 16, 2009. I'm not too impressed with the statistics. Some are valid and some I believe are not. Common sense is all we need. It has become clear and simple to me. These are the facts as I see them:

1. There has been an increase in the number of trucks in the Madison Valley since June, 2008 because the trucks have been rerouted from 191 to 287 due to construction on 191.
2. According to the office of the MTDOT, it has not been determined if trucks will be allowed back on 191 after the construction is completed in 2010.
3. Both 191 and 287 are critical to the health of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.
4. US Hwy 287 and MT 87 have been designated as two of the most critical wildlife corridors in the lower 48 states by the Craighead Institute. I personally think 191 should be in there as well, but that is not the statistic as I know it.
5. The Western Governor's Association made a resolution, in 2007, resolution 07-01, "Protecting Wildlife Migration Corridors and Crucial Wildlife Habitat in the West."
6. Alex Diekmann of The Trust for Public Land stated, quote: "The Madison Valley plays a central role in ensuring wildlife linkages between the GYE and the other ecologically intact areas of the Rocky Mountains, specifically, the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem and the wildlands of central Idaho, a vast area oftentimes referred to as the High Divide eco-region. In particular, the southern end of the valley is arguably the most important wildlife linkage zone in the entire GYE. protection of this area is critical because it is one of the only places offering secure passage for forest carnivores such as grizzly bear, wolverine and lynx migrating between the Madison Range to the east and the vast area of interconnected mountain ranges to the west and north. Protecting this area is absolutely vital to the long-term survival of these and other wide-ranging species, as development of private lands would create a significant barrier to the movement of ungulates, large carnivores and other species between the GYE and the ecosystems to the north and west.", unquote.
7. Alex Diekmann also said, "almost half (of the Madison Valley), or more than 187 square miles is already under conservation easement, and this does not even include the 114,000 acre easement that covers Ted Turner's Flying D Ranch to the north."
8. According to the Western Governors Resolution 07-01:
  - a. "Roads and rail lines can be impediments that make it difficult for animals to meet their basic life needs, sometimes completely isolating wildlife populations, which reduces genetic diversity and can threaten the population's persistence. Venturing near roads can also be deadly, due to collisions with vehicles. Vehicles collide with wildlife over one million times each year in the U.S. and the annual number of collisions has grown by 50% in the last 15 years. Road mortality is also cited as a

major threat to twenty-one federally listed threatened and endangered animal species.”

8. Resolution 07-01 states “Western Governors should consider developing and expanding programs to reduce traffic volume. Methods used to reduce traffic volume include rerouting or focusing traffic on highways less impacting to wildlife.”
9. I have read that the impetus of one truck equals twenty-eight cars. That being said, it makes sense to reduce the number of trucks. Based on the DOT statistics of 672 trucks going through Ennis in a two day period, that is equivalent to 18,816 cars. WOW. The number of cars going through during those two days was 4997. That’s over 3 times the number of cars.

My conclusion. It is the responsibility of the Governor to see that these critical wildlife corridors and habitat are protected as stated in the Western Governors Resolution. It is our responsibility as citizens to demand that the Governor take action to provide this protection. How do we do that? We voice our opinions in the public square and we fight with our votes. If our elected officials are not supporting our cause, then it is time to campaign for new elected officials. You must write and call your public servants and give them your opinion.

This will not be an easy task. It took the man who spear-headed getting the hazmat trucks off 191, 12 years to accomplish his goal. But, he was not armed with the Western Governors Resolution as we are.

we will have to work harder and speak louder.

I blame us, the citizens for not being more alert to the signs of this coming. The first being the new bridge just south of Ennis. Large trucks couldn’t go through the old bridge. Then the widening of the road on 287. And we thought it was for us the citizens of Madison Valley, I believe now that it was always for the trucks. Better do something quick or the Madison Valley will be a major truck route in the future.

Tricia Stabler

A question, comment or request has been submitted via the "Contact Us" web page.

Action Item: Ask MDT A Question  
Submitted: 01/18/2010 15:21:35  
Name: Kent D. Lee  
Address Line 1: P.O. Box 873  
Address Line 2: 417 West Main  
City: Ennis  
State/Province: Mt.  
Postal Code: 59729  
Email Address: [ferness\\_@3rivers.net](mailto:ferness_@3rivers.net)  
Phone Number: 406 682 4479

Comment or Question:

Dear Mr. Lynch. I live in Ennis, Mt. I feel the criticism that has been generated towards you and our governor are totally unjust; in regards to truck traffic on US287. They refer to your experience in the trucking industry is wrong. I appreciate someone of your experience in the position that you hold .I would sure like to know just how many vehicles that the state on Montana has; I have been around the trucking and construction, and mining industry for over 60 years. I am in process of writing a letter to the editor of the Madisonian, and would be thankful for the information. Sincerely,Kent D. Lee P.S. keep up the good work.

A question, comment or request has been submitted via the "Contact Us" web page.

Action Item: Other  
Submitted: 11/15/2009 17:33:01

Comment or Question:  
Subject: In favor of rerouting interstate semi truck traffic to I-15 from Highways 191 and 287

Dear Mr. Lynch,

Please consider a permanent rerouting of interstate semi truck traffic to I-15 from Highways 191 and 287. Many of the truckers drive over the speed limit and appear to significantly increase the hazardous nature of driving these two lane roads. Wildlife suffers in collisions with the semi trucks. Many tourists drive these roads as they are some of the most scenic.

Thank you,  
Mark Pearson  
Bozeman

A question, comment or request has been submitted via the "Contact Us" web page.

Action Item: Other  
Submitted: 11/07/2009 09:01:39  
Name: Ken and Val Hansen  
Address Line 1: 282 MT HWY 87  
City: Cameron  
State/Province: MT  
Postal Code: 59720  
Email Address: [sagewren@hotmail.com](mailto:sagewren@hotmail.com)

Comment or Question:  
Truck Traffic Safety Issues - Madison County

Valerie and Ken Hansen  
282 MT HWY 87  
Cameron, MT 59720

I am a Montana resident and one day when my husband and I were heading south on Highway 87 and wanted to turn left (east) into our driveway we turned our left turn signal on then slowed down to turn. The next thing we know a semi truck traveling behind us flew past us on the left side just before we were about to turn left. It was clear, sunny and roads were dry that day.

Fortunately it was before we initiated our left turn, but it was such a near accident that I wanted to do something about it to prevent the problem in the future. The semi truck was coming so fast that it couldn't slow down. Since then we are much more cautious of speeding semis that fly through on Highway 87. So much so that we pull over and let them pass before we attempt to turn left. We basically slow down and get off Highway 87 on the right side of the highway and let the semi trucks pass before we turn left onto our drive. If there is any doubt on speed or distance we do this.

They drive way to fast and when it's bad weather they don't seem to slow down much. This is unsafe. Last summer when some residents complained in Ennis there were some officers patrolling and caught 3 speeding trucks almost in front of our place. With the area growing there will be more and more permanent residents slowing down to turn left into their places, and more and more chances of having terrible wrecks. In fact just down the road from us there was a nasty wreck in August that closed the road for close to an hour. The placement of a stop sign warning light near the intersection of 287 and 87 to help prevent additional accidents shows the problem of fast heavy semi trucks stopping has already been acknowledged.

We would like to see the traffic slowed down for heavily loaded semi trucks that have a difficult time stopping for people turning into their residences.

Why is this road a major through-fare for semi trucks? Our neighbors on the same road also notice that during times when they enforce the scale weight limit for semi trucks on Highway 287 near Cameron that semi truck traffic noticeably diminishes.

We have witnessed speeding trucks that are marked "Hazard" and this scares us, not only for our own and others safety but for the environment.

If truck traffic drops when the weigh station is open then they are overweight and are damaging the roads.

I hope you will take this situation to heart and come up with a serious solution that protects the residences along Highway 87, 287 and Highway 20 in Idaho from this dangerous situation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Valerie and Ken Hansen