

By-pass design has Mayor upset

Written by George Browning

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Salem Mayor David Bower is not happy with the state's design of the recently opened bypass, or truck route.

Bower said the road is very nice, but he doesn't feel like there was as much thought put into the safety of the road as their needed to be.

"I am very disappointed in the state's design," he said. "We had no input into the design of the bypass. I am very disappointed in how inadequate the markings are."

Bower said the biggest problem is traffic traveling on the bypass coming to Highway 60 at a high rate of speed and thinking they don't have to stop.

"I think the state has done a poor job of marking the interstate," he said. "We've requested those flashing lights that are on 24/7 that indicate that there is a stop ahead."

Bower said rumble strips have been put in and stop signs on both sides of the road. He said the city put up barrels with flashing lights underneath the stop sign so it can be seen in low-light conditions.

"Something is going to have to be done," Bower said. "We've documented the times we've contacted the state on many, not several, many occasions requesting that they take a look at and improve that intersection."

Bower said he gets calls regularly on the danger of the intersection.

"What's sad is that someone is going to get killed before someone gets off their duff and does something about it," he said. "In my opinion there should have been in the design process a caution light facing both directions on 60 and a flashing red light on both sides of the bypass. In my opinion that would have taken care of the people blowing through the stop sign, and also warn people on 60 they need to slow down and be alert."

In other news about the bypass, Bower said the city is going to start aggressively initiating traffic stops in regards trucks in and around the square.

Bower said that will take place after the first of the year.

"It's going to be more of a warning system at first, but if we continue to see some of the same trucks using the square, they will be ticketed," he said.

There is a city ordinance already in place and the next step is to put up the signage to warn the trucks.

After the signs are in place, Bower said that's when the pull-over campaign will start.

"I think that's all we need," Bower said. "I do believe if you pull a trucker over and tell him he is not allowed to be around the square he won't go around it again."

The pull-over campaign does not affect trucks who have deliveries or business around the square.