Gravel Train Traffic Reminder

With Spring comes Alaska’s construction season, and an associated demand for gravel. We want to remind folks traveling to, from and around Palmer that gravel train traffic is resuming. The first train to Palmer is scheduled for early May 2019.

Trains load at the Anchorage Sand & Gravel (AS&G) gravel mine on the east side of the Glenn Highway, just south of the highway intersection with Outer Springer Loop. The Alaska Railroad (ARRC), hauls gravel from the Palmer facility to Anchorage processing plants that supply material for construction projects during the summer. The Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (ADOT&PF) is responsible for the highways and roadways along this stretch.

Background:

Over the years, the ARRC, ADOT&PF, City of Palmer and Matanuska-Susitna Borough have discussed various solutions to blocked crossings along the Glenn Highway. The timing of gravel train activity has been modified, taking into account many factors. These include gravel customer requirements, Anchorage municipal noise ordinance restrictions, scheduling for other passenger and freight train operations, and local traffic impacts. Gravel train operations have also been revised, such as splitting the train in half at Inner Springer Loop.

ARRC continues to work with ADOT&PF to investigate infrastructure solutions as part of the ongoing Glenn Highway improvement project. While the project will improve some crossings, temporary closures at Inner and Outer Loop crossings are not avoidable.

AS&G, ADOT&PF and ARRC have focused on mitigating traffic conflicts at the Inner/Outer Loop crossings with the Glenn Highway. These partners have worked with local legislators to address constituent concerns and better communicate with area residents. Internet-based solutions have proven most effective in getting temporary crossing closure information to the affected public so that they can make better-informed travel decisions.

Online and smart phone solutions include:

1. ADOT&PF 511 Traveler Information

Road conditions and other travel advisories are available from 511 online or by phone. During spring and summer, a description of general crossing blockage times is posted, as well as conditions that vary significantly from general operating times. Ways to access 511:

- **WEBSITE** – 511.alaska.gov
  - Type “Mat-Su” in the Location block, click the search icon. A Mat-Su area map appears.
  - Hover over the Planned Event icon along the Glenn Hwy, between Matanuska and Palmer, and a window appears, entitled Gravel Train Activity: Glenn Highway from Outer Springer Loop to Inner Springer Loop.

- **PHONE** – Dial 5-1-1 from inside Alaska
  - Say “Highway Reports”
  - Say “Anchorage to Palmer” at the main menu

- **MOBILE APPS**
  - Download the Android or iPhone App under “Stay Connected” at the bottom right area of the 511.alaska.gov main page. The 511 mobile site is available on all smartphone browsers.

2. Gravel Operations Web Cam

AS&G web cameras are aimed at the Outer Springer crossing (as well as several other views of the gravel operation). The real-time video feeds can be viewed online or on a smart phone:

- **COMPUTER**: [http://av128022.avertxddns.com](http://av128022.avertxddns.com)
  The site works only with the Internet Explorer browser. Users will be prompted to install Avertx software (Avertx is the camera manufacturer).

- **PHONE APP**: On a smart phone, download and install the Avertx GO! application.

  Enter Username Springer; Password 1234; Port 80; IP Address [av128022.avertxddns.com](http://av128022.avertxddns.com)
**Gravel Train Loading in Palmer**

Generally, gravel train loading in Palmer occurs daily during spring and summer (May - October) from about 6 to 10 a.m. (and also 6 to 10 p.m., if gravel demand requires two trains per day).

Once the empty 75- to 86-car, mile-long gravel train arrives in Palmer, hopper cars are loaded under the tipple as the train moves slowly north. Outer Springer Loop is blocked for about three hours. Grandview Circle and East Herman Road are blocked 10-20 minutes at the start of loading. Inner Springer Loop is blocked for 20-30 minutes while the final cars load.

Anchorage ordinances prohibit noisy industrial activity 10 p.m. to 6 a.m., factoring into gravel train schedules.

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**QUESTIONS?**

If you have questions about...

- **Alaska Railroad** gravel hauling operations, contact ARRC Corporate Communications Officer Stephenie Wheeler at (907) 265-2671 or ARRC External Affairs Manager Tim Sullivan at (907) 265-2357 or email Public_Comment@akrr.com.

- **Anchorage Sand & Gravel** gravel business or web cam, contact the AS&G office at (907) 349-3333.

- **Department of Transportation** (DOT) 511 Traveler Information, contact Lisa Idell-Sassi at (907) 465-8952; or the DOT Glenn Highway Improvement project, contact Shannon McCarthy at (907) 269-0448.