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Orange cones ahead? We've got you covered.

Smart phones, smart cars and now smarter work zones

PHOENIX, AZ – Maricopa County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) is using 'smart' technology to shorten commute times through construction zones. The technology is known as Smarter Work Zone (SWZ) and MCDOT is one of the first in the nation to utilize SWZ on heavily traveled city/urban roadways known as "arterial" roadways.

MCDOT's goal is to use smart technology to protect those working on roadways. Last year there were 799 fatalities in work zones. 132 of those were roadside workers.

Wireless sensors gather information about work zone conditions. This information is then processed by a computer system which calculates travel times and is even able to warn drivers about potential delays through digital signs. Drivers can then avoid the delay by choosing another route. This reduces the number of vehicles actually going through the work zone making it quicker and safer.

Using this technology also has the added benefit of helping out on high pollution days as reduced traffic and quicker travel times mean less idling and thus fewer emissions.

MCDOT is piloting the Smarter Work Zone on MC 85, from 95th Avenue to 75th Avenue. The average daily traffic on this road is 20,000 cars per day. Work zones are a necessary part of improvement yet also an inconvenience; with Smarter Work Zone technology MCDOT is finding innovative ways to reduce their impact and keep connections moving even during construction.

Demonstrations of this technology can be arranged on Thursday, July 11 or Friday, July 12. Please call or text Rainey Daye Holloway at 602-397-1273 for a behind the scenes tour. There is an embeddable [video available on YouTube](#) and additionally, we [have b-roll available for download](#).