

Industry Partners,

Effective Oct. 3, 2025, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) issued an Interim Final Rule (IFR) modifying Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) and Airport Concession Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (ACDBE) program regulations. The full text of the IFR can be found [here](#). Additionally, USDOT issued guidance related to those regulation modifications.

ADOT is reviewing the regulatory modifications, using current guidance and any further guidance from USDOT to understand the changes that will align ADOT's DBE Program with the Interim Final Rule and federal regulations.

We understand there is uncertainty and you may have additional questions. Please know ADOT is working through the new guidance and will provide updates when we have more information to share.

Thank you,

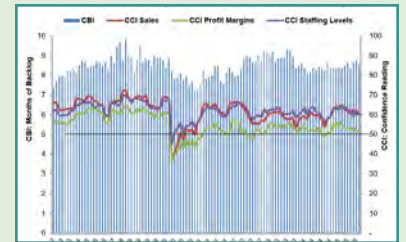
ADOT Business Engagement and Compliance Office (BECO)



From guesswork to game plan



Buckeye planning major growth for local airport



Construction backlog down, confidence steady

ADOT wins 2 national awards for public outreach on major projects

I-17 and Broadway Curve get top honors at annual conference

Two major transportation corridors. Two major projects that required extensive public outreach to keep drivers informed and engaged about what to expect during construction.

Last month, the Arizona Department of Transportation's Office of Communications and Public Involvement won two top awards during the annual meeting of TransComm, the communications committee for the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), a national nonprofit group that represents and supports state departments of transportation.

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ADOT wins 2 national awards for public outreach on major projects (Cont'd)

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ADOT's winners are:

I-17 Improvement Project: Public Involvement Approach with a Consultant

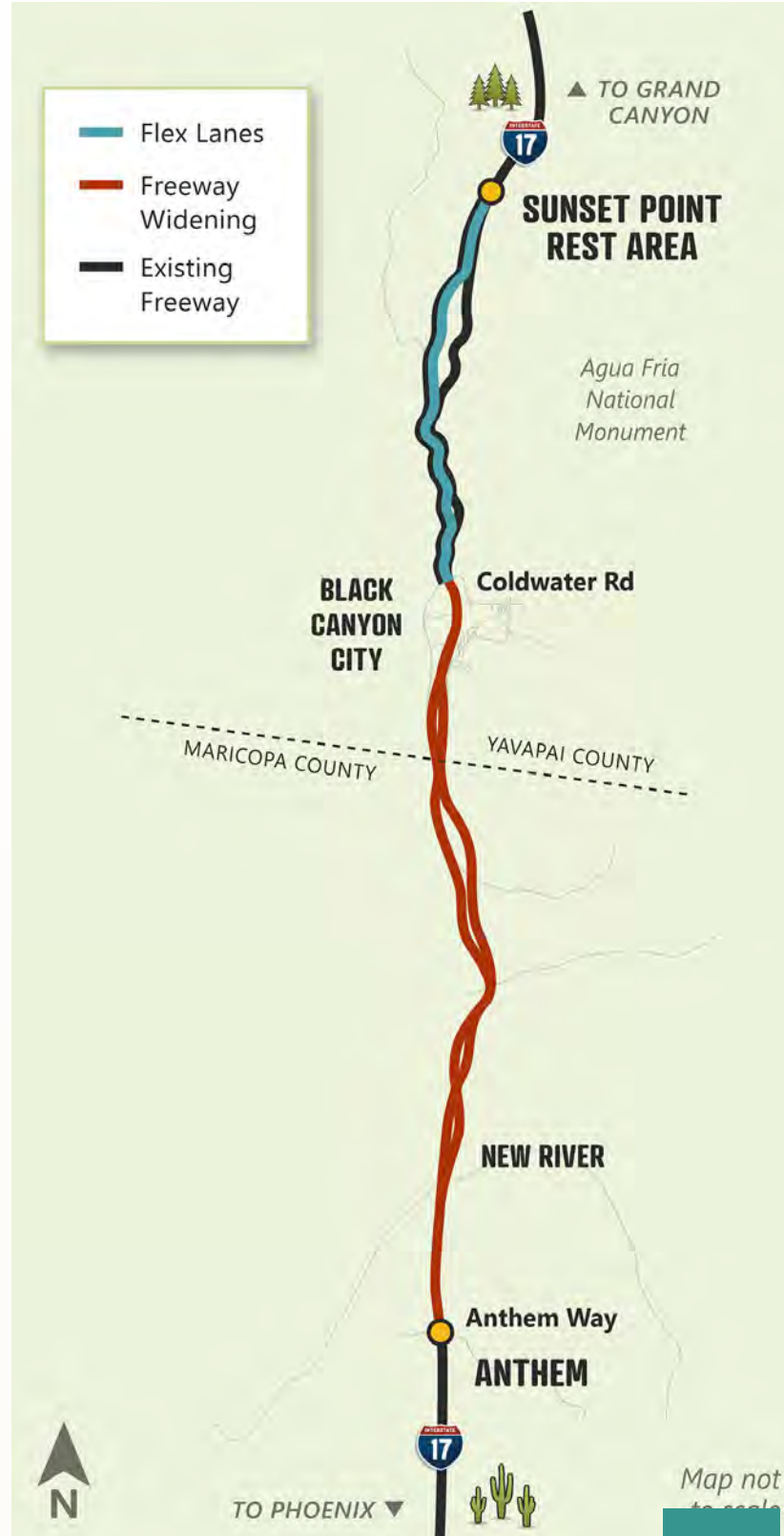
This award recognizes a specific campaign that informs the public on transportation improvements with the help of a consultant. The [I-17 Improvement Project's](#) public involvement team used a variety of tools, outreach and visual storytelling to educate and engage all audiences about this major project along 23 miles of Interstate 17 between Anthem Way and Sunset Point. The goal of the campaign was to keep the public informed about both the widening portion of the project and Arizona's first flex lanes system, while providing progress updates and celebrating milestones that highlighted the daily construction process.

I-10 Broadway Curve Improvement Project: Excel with a Consultant

This recognition represents AASHTO's highest award for public relations programs and campaigns. Recognizing specific techniques that made a pivotal contribution to the success of a broad-based communication endeavor using two or more public relations tools. The [I-10 Broadway Curve Improvement Project](#) used traditional and non-traditional public involvement outreach to inform the public about ADOT's largest urban freeway reconstruction project along 11 miles of one of the busiest stretches of I-10 through the Phoenix metropolitan area. The project used a paid advertising campaign and a free mobile app – both firsts for an ADOT freeway construction project – as some of the channels to keep the public updated throughout the four-year construction project.

This year's annual TransComm conference in Chicago included more than 200 transportation communicators representing all state DOTs. The conference included a yearly awards ceremony, with each category representing the best transportation projects around the country and the communications strategies and tactics that make them stand out. Each category is voted on by communication teams from the state DOTs.

ADOT Communications and Public Involvement supports projects and agency priorities through public involvement outreach, news media relations, safety communications, social media engagement, graphics and video production, website design and operations, internal communications, constituent services, employee engagement and recognition and more.



From guesswork to game plan

The roadmap to next year starts now

As October rolls in the pressure to plan for next year can build. You know you should be thinking ahead, setting goals and figuring out where the money will go. Between daily fires, staff issues and a shifting market, planning can feel overwhelming...and budgeting can feel like guesswork.

You are not alone. Many small business owners reach this point in the year feeling stuck.

You want to grow, but you may be unsure where to invest.

You want to be strategic, but your financial reports are hard to trust.

You want to feel confident, but there are many moving parts.

Without a plan, it is easy to drift. Spending decisions become reactive. Growth feels unpredictable. Opportunities pass by because there is no roadmap.

But here's the good news: when you take the time to plan and budget, even in the middle of uncertainty, something shifts. You start making decisions intentionally. You gain clarity, direction and control. You stop second-guessing yourself and start acting like the leader your business needs.

It doesn't have to be complicated. Below are five planning and budgeting challenges small business owners face, along with practical ways to move through each one.

1. Uncertainty in the market

Rising costs, shifting customer habits and supply chain issues can make next year feel impossible to predict. However, waiting for things to "settle down" is not a plan.

Try this:

- *Plan in ranges. Instead of one revenue target, build scenarios: low, mid and stretch. This gives you flexibility if things change.*
- *Break the year into quarters. Forecast in 90-day chunks. It is easier to adjust four times a year than guess once and hope for the best.*
- *Set a trigger list. Identify what would make you adjust the plan, such as a key client leaving, a price hike or new competition.*

2. Lack of clear goals

A budget without direction is just a spreadsheet. Planning needs to start with goals that are specific, realistic and tied to outcomes.

Try this:

- *Pick three main goals. Limit your focus to what matters most: for example, increasing repeat business, reducing turnover or launching a new product or service.*
- *Use numbers. "Grow sales" is vague. "Increase monthly sales by 15% by June" gives you a target to build a budget around.*
- *Ask "What does success look like?" Paint a clear picture of what you want next year to look like before assigning dollars.*



From guesswork to game plan (Cont'd)

The roadmap to next year starts now

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3. Inconsistent financial records

If your books are messy, your budget will be too. Planning only works when you have reliable information to base decisions on.

Try this:

- *Do a financial clean-up now. Work with your bookkeeper or accountant to ensure all records are up to date before budgeting begins.*
- *Review the past 12 months. What did you spend the most on? What paid off? What drained cash without return?*
- *Use percentages, not just dollars. Look at spending as a percent of revenue. This reveals trends you might miss otherwise.*

4. Trying to do it all alone

Planning is not just about numbers. It is about strategy, team input and accountability. Many owners stall because they feel they must do it solo.

Try this:

- *Build a planning circle. This could be a manager, your Certified Public Accountant (CPA), a peer group or even a spouse. The goal is to get input, not carry the load alone.*
- *Schedule a planning day. Block time off-site or in a quiet space to focus. Invite one or two trusted people to help you think through goals.*
- *Assign owners. Do not keep everything in your head. If you have a team, let others own parts of the plan, including marketing, operations or hiring.*

5. Fear of change

Planning means making decisions, such as what to do more of, less of or stop entirely. That can feel risky, even if the current path is not working.

Try this:

- *Run a "stop doing" list. What products, services or habits are not paying off? Cutting dead weight frees up budget and brainpower.*
- *Reframe change as improvement. Budgeting is not about punishment. It is about directing resources toward what works.*
- *Take one bold step. Add one high-impact goal to your plan that moves you outside your comfort zone, like a price increase, a new hire or a new market.*

The payoff: confidence and clarity

Picture this: You walk into January with a clear roadmap. You know what you want, what it will take and how to pay for it. You are not scrambling. You are not reacting. You are leading.

Planning and budgeting do not need to be perfect. They just need to be yours, based on your goals, your numbers and your values. The best part? You will not just feel more organized. You will feel more confident, more focused and more in control of your business.

And that is a great way to start the year.



Construction backlog down, confidence steady

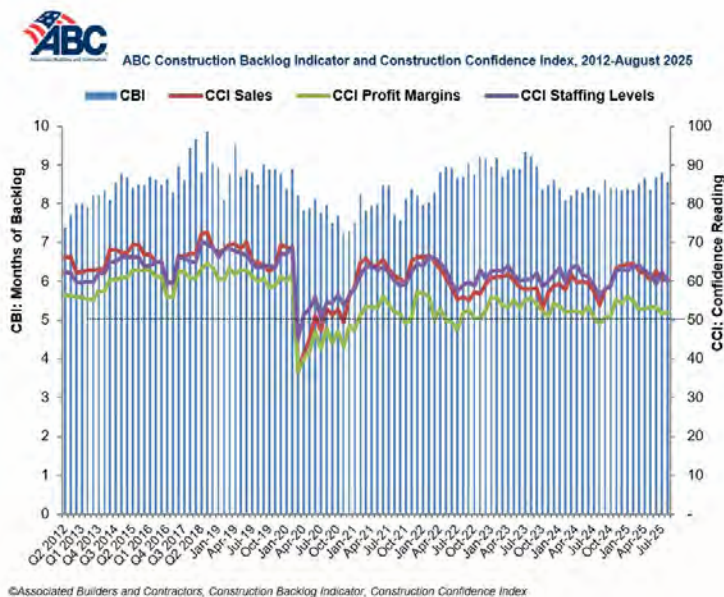
Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) reported its Construction Backlog Indicator fell from 8.8 months in July to 8.5 months in August, according to an ABC member survey conducted Aug. 20 to Sept. 3. The reading is up 0.3 months since August 2024.

The monthly decline in backlog was entirely attributable to contractors with fewer than \$30 million in annual revenues. Backlog has risen in each of the past three months for ABC's largest contractors and is now at the highest level in over two years.

ABC's Construction Confidence Index reading for sales was unchanged in August. The reading for staffing declined, while the reading for profit margins increased. The readings for all three components remain above the threshold of 50, indicating expectations for growth over the next six months.

"The dip in backlog observed in August is not surprising given ongoing [declines in nonresidential construction spending](#)," said ABC Chief Economist Anirban Basu. "While backlog in the heavy industry and infrastructure categories has held up well, commercial and institutional backlog has not. With private sector projects struggling under the weight of rising materials costs, policy uncertainty and reemerging labor shortages, that category may remain weak over the next few quarters.

"About one in four contractors reported having a project delayed or canceled due to tariffs," said Basu. "While that is relatively stable from July, a similar share reported project delays or cancellations due to lack of funding and labor force issues. While contractor confidence was stable for the month, it will be interesting to see how long this optimism persists if the myriad headwinds facing the industry remain in place." ([Source](#))



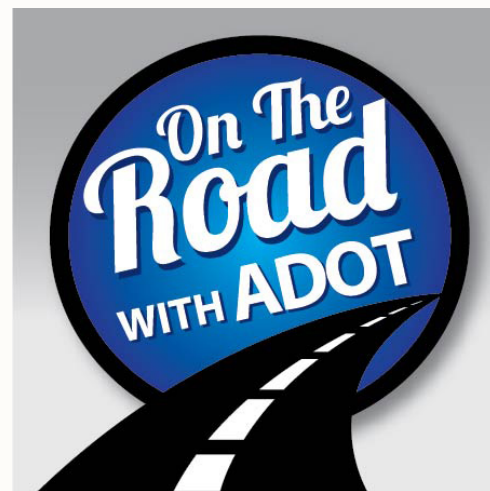
PODCAST: What's coming to Valley freeways under Prop 479?

There's a lot of anticipation and excitement about improvement projects coming to Valley freeways after Maricopa County voters approved Proposition 479 last year. The extension of a half-cent tax to fund transportation projects in the Phoenix region means important work will start as soon as next year, building on decades of coordination between ADOT and MAG on freeway construction and improvements.

Recently John Bullen, Assistant Executive Director and Chief Transportation Officer with the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG), was featured as a guest on ADOT's podcast "On the Road with ADOT". While ADOT will build the projects, MAG manages the funding and scheduling of the improvements under its [Regional Transportation Plan](#).

Listen in as John talks with host Doug Nintzel about what the future holds for enhancing Loop 303 at and around Interstate 17 in the North Valley, the area around Loop 303 and US 60 (Grand Avenue) in the Northwest Valley, I-10 widening south of the Valley, State Route 347 within Maricopa County and much more. It's an interesting discussion about how voters have invested in the Phoenix area's modern freeway system.

Listen to the [episode](#).





OCTOBER

18

AZ Masonry: 2025 Masonry EXPO

6 a.m.

Location: Oldcastle's Lone Butte Plant

6629 W. Germann Road, Chandler

22

ACEC: Arizona HR/Business Practices Forum

8 - 9:30 a.m.

Location: ACEC Arizona

3550 N. Central Ave., Ste. 1140, Phoenix

23

ABA: Member Mixer Hosted by Clayco

4 - 6 p.m.

Location: Clayco

4300 E. Camelback Road, Ste. 300, Phoenix

23

AIA AZ: Arizona 2025 State Conference

8 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.

Location: Clayton House

3719 N. 75th St., Scottsdale

22 - 24

AAED: 2025 Fall Forum

7:30 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Location: Prescott Resort & Conference Center

1500 AZ-69, Prescott

25

ATB: Annual Auction

5 - 9:30 p.m.

Location: Double Tree by Hilton Reid Park

445 S. Alvernon Way, Tucson

Check out these **Workforce Connections Resources**



ARIZONA
Apprenticeship
Program



ARIZONA
Office of Economic
Opportunity



ARIZONA
On-the-Job Training
Supportive Services



ARIZONA
Registrar of
Contractors



Featured Federal-Aid Projects

CURRENT OPEN SOLICITATIONS

Due Date	Project Valuation	Solicitation / Project Number	Type	Project Owner and Description	Contact
10/17/25 11:00 a.m. MST	\$24.6 million	095-B-(221)T; F083201C	IFB	ADOT - Intersection Improvements, San Luis to Yuma Quartzsite Hwy (US 95) from Imperial Dam to Aberdeen Road. The work consists of roundabout intersections at the Imperial Dam Road and Aberdeen Road intersections, roadway widening from the existing 2-lane undivided roadway to a 4-lane roadway at the roundabout intersection and after the roundabout the roadway will transition back to the existing two-lane roadway.	Farhana Jesmin, Engineering Specialist, at fjesmin@azdot.gov.
10/17/25 11:00 a.m. MST	\$2.6 million	GIL-0-(218)T; T033601C	IFB	ADOT - System Enhancement, Mews Road beginning at Higley Road. The work consists of paving gravel roadway, construction of a concrete drainage channel on the south side of Mews Road, and waterline and sewer line extensions and other related work.	Jalal Kamal, Engineering Specialist, at Jkamal@azdot.gov.
10/24/25 11:00 a.m. MST	\$316 million	101-A-(218)T; F047501C	IFB	ADOT - System Enhancement, Agua Fria Freeway (SR 101L) from SR 101 and I-10 System TI, Maricopa County. The work consists of shifting the Northbound and Southbound SR 101L roadways and associated ramps to the outside, shifting Eastbound I-10 roadway and the associated ramps near the System Traffic Interchange outside, and constructing a new Direct High Occupancy Vehicle (DHOV) ramp roadway and bridge from the SR 101L median to the I-10 median, widening one SR 101L southbound bridge, constructing two new bridges for a new connection from 101L southbound to McDowell road, retaining walls, drainage, signing, pavement marking, lighting, landscaping and other related work.	Mohammed Patwary, Engineering Specialist, MPatwary@azdot.gov.

External Links:

[ADOT Current Advertisements](#)
[ADOT Engineering Advertisements](#)
[ADOT Public-Private Partnership Initiatives](#)
[ADOT Advertised Alternative Delivery Projects](#)
[Bidding Opportunities Around the State](#)

DBE SUPPORTIVE SERVICES PROGRAM

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