

Regional Focused Frequently Asked Questions

(Responses current as of **5/30/2024**)

Middle and Lake Fork Bridges

1Q: Is there an estimated reopening date for the Middle Bridge?

A: The bridge will be repaired in two phases. The goal is to finish phase 1 in early July which will allow reopening one lane across the bridge for limited travel by lighter vehicles. Phase 2 work will focus on making permanent repairs to allow full traffic back onto the bridge. The completion of this work – and the reopening of the full bridge – is expected in fall 2024.

More information regarding the US 50 Middle Bridge is found here:

<https://www.codot.gov/projects/us50bluemesa>

2Q: Are you completing inspections on the other bridges in the area, specifically the bridge west of the closed bridge? If so, what are the status of those inspections?

A: All bridge inspections are performed through the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and contracted agencies. The Middle Bridge was closed on April 18th, 2024 due to safety concerns. The bridge west of the Middle Bridge is referred to as Lake Fork Bridge. An initial visual inspection of the Lake Fork Bridge did not reveal any defects. A full inspection of the Lake Fork Bridge is planned after the Middle Bridge inspection is complete and the first phases of repairs have been completed. As of 5/20/2024 per CDOT, the inspection on the Middle Bridge was 100% completed. The first phase of repairs are due to be completed by July 4, 2024.

For more information about CDOT's bridge inspection process, please visit

<https://www.codot.gov/news/media/overview>

Gunnison County Road 26

SAFETY MESSAGE: It is strongly advised to stay inside or directly next to your vehicle when waiting in queue lines for pilot releases. While people, children, and pets may need to get out of the vehicle for various reasons, this poses a safety concern when working vehicles and emergency vehicles need to share the road as well as when the alternating release of vehicles drive by. To keep everyone's trip across County Road 26 safe, minimize impacts to all travelers and workers, and to avoid delaying the timing of the releases, all are asked to stay inside or right next to your vehicle.

3Q: Why is County Road 26 labeled as a local access route?

A: County Road 26 was not built or maintained to be a high traffic road. Considerations for safety, wildlife and increased traffic volume were needed to open it up as a viable route. A prioritized balance between allowing access as well as time for repairs and improvements is still required. Over the past few weeks, progress has been made to increase vehicle weight on the road. This update allows for most commercial vehicles to utilize County Road 26 now. Visit <https://www.gunnisoncounty.org/1078/Hwy-50-Bridge-Closure> to see current road restrictions and pilot release times. Those who are visiting the area and

surrounding areas will be allowed across County Road 26. Those who are traveling across the state of Colorado should plan to utilize the north or south detours along Interstate 70 or US 160, respectively.

4Q: Do I need to bring any documents to prove that I'm a local resident to use County Road 26?

A: No proof of residency is required. It is not to be used as a general detour for US 50 if you are traveling through Colorado.

5Q: If I have a doctor's appointment, am I able to use the County Road 26 detour?

A: Yes. You will need to arrange to travel during the current pilot release times. To confirm what the release times are, please visit <https://www.gunnisoncounty.org/1078/Hwy-50-Bridge-Closure>.

6Q: If I arrive at the pilot location by the time the pilot operations start, will I be able to get through? For example, if there is a long line of cars and I'm not at the front of the line by the cutoff time, will they turn me away?

A: The pilot release times indicate when vehicles are allowed to start traveling across County Road 26. If you are in the queue line, you will make it across the road. The flaggers will direct vehicles that arrive after the queue line has departed. All travelers are advised to arrive in time to be in the queue line. The intent of the pilot release times is to balance use of County Road 26 while allowing for improvement work and repairs needed to continue as well as to ensure safe traveling on the road.

7Q: When are the piloted release times?

A: You can find the current release times posted at <https://www.gunnisoncounty.org/1078/Hwy-50-Bridge-Closure> and can receive emailed updates when release times change by signing up for Notify Me Alerts at the following website and selecting for Travel Advisories- <https://www.gunnisoncounty.org/list.aspx>.

8Q: Where are the pilot route borders and where do we line up?

A: The westbound queue starts at the intersection of Hwy 149 and County Road 26, which is approximately 36 miles west of Gunnison and requires about 35-45 minutes of travel time.

The eastbound queue starts at the intersection of US 50 and Country Road 26, which is approximately 42 miles from Montrose. Be advised that the Little Blue Creek Canyon construction project has resumed. Information for travelers can be found at <https://www.us50info.com/>.



9Q: What restrictions are on County Road 26? Am I able to drive a trailer/camper on the detour? (Updated on 5/30/2024)

A: All highway legal vehicles under 85,000 Gross Vehicle Weight Rating, except Hazardous Materials, are allowed to travel on County Road 26 during the piloted release times.

To find the State of Colorado Legal Highway Size and Weight Limitations, please visit

<https://leg.colorado.gov/content/size-and-weight-limitations>.

To find the current piloted release times, please visit <https://www.gunnisoncounty.org/1078/Hwy-50-Bridge-Closure>.

10Q: Approximately, how long does the detour take on County Road 26?

A: Travel on County Road 26 from both westbound and eastbound closures will take about 30-45 minutes. The pilot car travels around 30 mph. Timing across County Road 26 is subject to fluctuation with other operations taking place on the road. County Road 26 is 16 miles long.

11Q: Do you need to sign up to use the County Road 26 detour or should we just join the queue?

A: No need to sign up, just join the queue line or arrive during the release timeframes. To see the current pilot release times please visit <https://www.gunnisoncounty.org/1078/Hwy-50-Bridge-Closure>. The westbound queue line is located at the entrance of County Road 26, which is 21 miles off Highway 149 and the eastbound queue line is located at the entrance of County Road 26 and US 50 around mile marker 135 and 136.

12Q: Is local traffic allowed on County Road 26 after pilot hours?

A: No. Travel is allowed between pilot releases or overnight. Only critical emergency travel by emergency responders is permitted at any time on the road, as necessary. Flaggers are posted at the westbound and eastbound entrances 24/7, please be respectful and cautious.

13Q: Will bicycles be permitted on County Road 26?

A: We strongly recommend that cyclists avoid traveling on County Road 26, though it is not prohibited. While the road has been improved to allow for a single lane of timed entry, it is still a compacted dirt surface with the requirement to clear the road before the next timed entry traffic. We cannot guarantee the safety of bicyclists on this route and for that reason it is recommended to use alternate roads for recreational cycling. Check with local bike shops for information about where to ride and upcoming events and races.

14Q: Would persons with land on either side of County Road 26 be allowed to drive their tractors or backhoes?

A: The equipment must meet the current guidance and restrictions in place for County Road 26 and State of Colorado Size and Weight regulations, then they would be allowed during the scheduled release times.

15Q: I have property off County Road 26, when can I travel on the road?

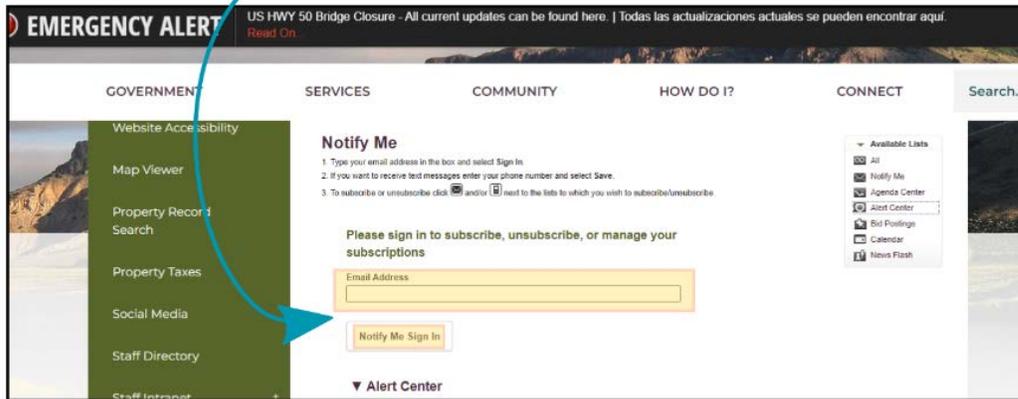
A: Please plan accordingly to utilize the pilot release times. The current release times can be found at <https://www.gunnisoncounty.org/1078/Hwy-50-Bridge-Closure>.

16Q: How can I receive updates on County Road 26?

A: Yes. You can sign up for Notify Me Alerts through Gunnison County to receive updates on County Road 26 release times, guidelines, and restrictions. See the visual below for how to sign up for Notify Me Alerts.

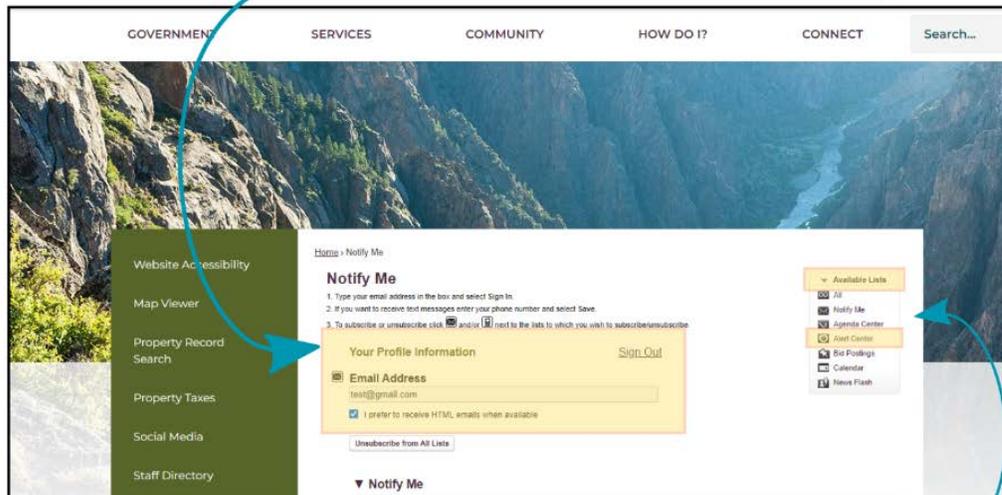
1

Navigate to <https://www.gunnisoncounty.org/list.aspx#>. Enter your email in the Email Address field and then click the Notify Me Sign In button.



2

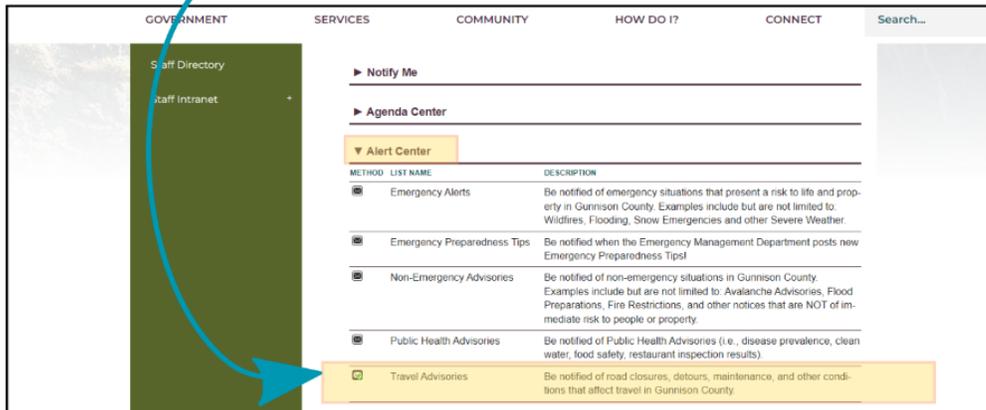
On the next page, check the box to indicate whether you want to receive HTML emails when available.



You can select "Alert Center" from this dropdown list to assist with locating the correct alert selection.

3

From the Alert Center dropdown, click the email icon for "Travel Advisories".



Kebler Pass

17Q: Are you working on opening other detour routes like Kebler Pass? When will Kebler Pass be open?

A: Yes, work on Kebler Pass began on April 25, 2024. Snow has been cleared, and additional culverts have been installed to improve drainage from melting snow. The roads are currently in the process of drying. Late season winter weather, including snow and high winds, has caused delays due to downed trees and additional snow removal, particularly on the east side of the pass. Magnesium chloride (MgCl₂) a.k.a. Mag-Chloride will be applied to the road over Kebler Pass. The Mag-Chloride is used for dust abatement and soil stabilization. Kebler Pass is a winding high mountain pass with steep grades and a mixture of gravel and pavement. There are limited services and no cell reception.

The anticipated opening date is **May 31, 2024**.

18Q: What type of travel will be permitted across Kebler Pass?

A: The standard size and weight restrictions will apply - vehicles more than 15 tons (30,000 lbs.) and vehicles more than 50 feet long are not permitted to travel over Kebler Pass. The length restriction applies to a combined length, including any trailers or towed equipment. This year, there will be traffic flaggers posted on either end of the pass during the day to ensure vehicle restrictions are followed.

Kebler is planned to be open overnight.

Hwy 50 - Little Blue Canyon Construction Project

19Q: Is the Little Blue construction on hold during this bridge repair?

A: The Little Blue Canyon Construction Project resumed on May 13th, 2024. Please visit <https://www.us50info.com/> for more details. Coordination is being done to minimize travel impacts between the Little Blue Canyon construction area and travel across County Road 26 during the release times.

General Questions

20Q: Are you working on opening other detour routes like County Road 25? (response current as of 5/30/2024)

A: County Road 25 is being assessed for repairs as well as what type of travel can be done safely on that type of road considering the steepness of grades and curves. The planned repairs will be addressing the potholes.

21Q: Are mail/garbage/propane/oxygen and other deliveries allowed to residents in the closure? How are you coordinating with these companies?

A: Gunnison County, CDOT and Kiewit are working with various companies and suppliers to coordinate travel across County Road 26.

22Q: What does recreation access look like? Are people allowed to bring boats to the area? How about fishing?

A: Access to recreation areas around Blue Mesa Reservoir between mile markers 138 at Red Creek and east towards Gunnison is open. Both the Elk Creek Marina and the Lake Fork Marina are open as well as the lola boat launch and other boat launches between US 50 mile marker 138 and east towards Gunnison. For more information regarding access, dates for openings and permitted recreation for the National Park/Recreation areas, Forest Service and BLM Roads, please use the links provided below.

National Park Service

Curecanti: <https://www.nps.gov/cure/index.htm>

Black Canyon of the Gunnison: <https://www.nps.gov/blca/index.htm>

USFS GMUG: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/gmug>

Bureau of Land Management: <https://www.blm.gov/visit>

23Q: What economic relief funds are available for affected businesses? I heard there are loans available.

A: When the Emergency Declaration was made, the State of Colorado Recovery Task Force Team was initiated. While the team continues to identify any available relief funding or loans, all businesses are advised to maintain records and track losses incurred from the bridge closure as well as reach out to their insurance companies. Maintaining records of losses will become imperative in order to receive funding if it becomes available.

24Q: Where can I find recordings for CDOT public Meetings?

A: Recordings for the US 50 Blue Mesa Emergency Repairs Public Meetings can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/@ColoradoDOT/videos> or <https://www.codot.gov/projects/us50bluemesa/community>.
