

NDOT to investigate safety of railroad crossings in Nevada

By Martha Bellisle, Reno Gazette-Journal

A state agency has launched a statewide investigation into all Nevada roads with high speed limits and railroad crossings after a *Reno Gazette-Journal* report found that nine months ago another truck almost crashed into an Amtrak passenger train at the site of last week's deadly crash.

Scott Magruder, spokesman for the Nevada Department of Transportation, said they now plan to do an inventory on roads with speed limits above 60 mph to ensure they "provide the safest rail crossings and roads possible."

The examination will focus on three Nevada roads that have rail crossings and 70 mph speed limits, and three roads with rail tracks and 65 mph speed limits, Magruder said.

Ron Kaminkow, the engineer on the Amtrak train that was hit last Friday by a truck, leaving six dead, including the conductor from South Lake Tahoe, and dozens injured, said the Highway 95 site is a dangerous crossing and said he hopes changes are made so that crashes like the one he was in never occur again.

"Given what has happened twice in the last nine months, common sense should prevail," Kaminkow said. "Simple cost-effective measures would appear to be available, including warning rumble stripes, flashing warning signs well in advance of the crossing and a reduction in the speed limit on the road."

No one was injured in the near-miss on Sept. 14, 2010. The truck driver hit the intersection's guard rails instead of the train. The driver was cited by Nevada Highway Patrol for "failure to use due care."

Read the whole story