

Caltrans installs weather station; who clears sidewalks not resolved

By Kathryn Reed

With a storm brewing, Caltrans will be able to use its Roadway Weather Information Station that was installed Monday to know more about what is going on in the South Shore.

The station, which is in the maintenance yard on top of Echo Summit, is about 20-feet tall and is triangular shaped. The installation marks the end of the Echo Summit road project. That was mostly about replacing the rock guardrail.



The Echo Summit project is officially completed.

Photo/LTN

The point of the weather station is to help dispatch Caltrans resources more effectively, while also helping Caltrans to inform motorists of fast-changing travel conditions.

Also, a mile of Highway 50 at the summit was paved.

The other paving project in town is wrapping up. What was slated to be a three-year endeavor may turn out to be two, but that won't be known until the project is well under way again

in 2012.

As it stands, the Trout Creek to Ski Run project – which involves water quality improvement, road surface upgrades and bike trails – is 55 percent finished after the first season.

According to Deanna Shoopman with Caltrans, Disney – the contractor, does not receive a bonus for finishing earlier.

“This is his first big contract with the state so he is excited to finish early,” Shoopman said of the contractor. “He’s coming up with a better traffic plan for next year.”

Once the project is completely finished, it will be up to the city to maintain the sidewalks. However, Shoopman said Caltrans will not be plowing the sidewalks this winter despite that they are under the state’s responsibility until the project is done.

The city and Caltrans are still negotiating whose responsibility it is this winter to keep those sidewalks clear.

When the contractor leaves for good, anything behind the curb will be South Lake Tahoe’s responsibility, while the street is still the state’s job to clear.

An ordinance mandating private property owners shovel their walkways in the public right-of-way is now in effect.

City Manager Tony O’Rourke said the city is meeting next week with BlueGo officials to talk about having a plan to coordinate clearing some sidewalks under the city’s responsibility at the same time bus shelters are cleared.

The city, Caltrans and Disney officials are still talking regarding who shovels the sidewalks this winter. A resolution may be needed by Friday based on the forecast.