

# DECK PARK TUNNEL TURNED 30 IN 2020, GETS NEW LIGHTING IN 2021

If you're like us, you likely hear "Deck Park Tunnel" in the voice of Detour Dan Beach, longtime intrepid chopper pilot and traffic reporter for KTAR.

And if the Interstate 10 Deck Park Tunnel near downtown Phoenix is part of your driving routine, you have likely noticed work underway on the lights used to illuminate the 30-year-old project. The Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) in January began a \$1.4 million project to add a modern LED lighting system in the I-10 tunnel, which extends approximately three-quarters of a mile between Third Street and Third Avenue. The LED lights are replacing a high-pressure sodium lighting system that has been in use since the Deck Park Tunnel first opened. In all, crews are scheduled to change out more than 3,200 individual lights inside the tunnel during overnight closures over the next few months.

As with the current system, the improved LED tunnel lights will be set at appropriate transitioning levels during daylight and nighttime hours to allow a driver's vision to adapt according to outside lighting levels—for example, running fewer lights at night because of lower ambient nighttime light levels outside the tunnel.

In addition to enhancing safety, the use of LED lights in the tunnel is anticipated to produce more than \$175,000 in annual energy savings.

Closures for lighting installation are currently

scheduled overnight from Fridays at 9pm to Saturdays at 9am. The tunnel lighting project is being paid for with ADOT maintenance funds.

## Happy Birthday, Deck Park Tunnel

One of the many things easily missed during pandemic lockdowns in 2020 was the anniversary of the I-10 Deck Park Tunnel, which opened in August 1990. Before the project officially opened to traffic on August 10, the public was allowed to walk, ride and tour the tunnel. The tunnel had prominent status as the final segment that connected Interstate 10 from coast to coast—a 2,500-mile interstate from Santa Monica, California to Jacksonville, Florida that took more than 30 years to complete. Just in Arizona, I-10 is nearly 400 miles long.

ADOT points out that the Deck Park Tunnel isn't actually a tunnel, but a set of 19 side-by-side bridges. On top of all of those is Margaret T Hance Park, a 32-acre city park that is more than just a green space—it's home to Arizona Humanities, Burton Barr Central Library, Cutler Plotkin Jewish Heritage Center, Irish Cultural Center, Japanese Friendship Garden and Phoenix Center for the Arts.

Also known as the Papago Freeway Tunnel, it is the brief home to 290,000 vehicles daily. Besides those 3,200-plus lightbulbs, the tunnel is also home to four large ventilation fans and one hidden lane—a single lane between the east- and west-

bound tubes, originally meant to be an express bus lane but not in use and closed to the public. The tunnel is also home to a control room, the original ADOT Traffic Operations Center. Today, ADOT employees specific to managing the tunnel and its operations work in that control room.

## RENEW YOUR LICENSE ONLINE

ADOT's online motor vehicle services, in our experience, are second to none—convenient, quick, accurate and cost-efficient. And good news: you can now renew your driver's license online, a new service spurred by the push for contactless options during the pandemic.

As an Executive Order from the governor deferring standard driver's license expirations ended on February 28, the ADOT Motor Vehicle Division introduced the ability to renew your license online, a process that used to require an office visit.

An in-office visit will still be required if your photo of record was taken more than 12 years prior, but most Arizonans will be able to renew their license without visiting an MVD office. Just log in at [AZMVDNow.gov](http://AZMVDNow.gov) to check eligibility.

To renew a CDL online, your address must be the same, a valid primary document needs to be on file with MVD, and your current credential must be in good standing. Those with a hazmat endorsement will not be able to renew their license online.

This new, streamlined renewal option was made possible in large part when MVD implemented a state-of-the-art computer operating system last spring. ■

