

Safety Rest Area Free Coffee Program Report

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**Washington State
Department of Transportation**

As required in ESHB 1160, Section 215 (8), this is a report to the Washington State Legislature on the results of an online calendar implemented for volunteers participating in the free coffee program at the State's Safety Rest Areas.

Background

The 2019 Legislature directed the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to begin a "...pilot program for the 2019-2021 fiscal biennium at the four highest demand safety rest areas to create and maintain an online calendar for volunteer groups to check availability of weekends for the the free coffee program. The calendar must be updated at least weekly and show dates and times that are, or are not, available to participate in the free coffee program. The department must submit a report to the legislature on the ongoing pilot by December 1, 2020, outlining the costs and benefits of the online calendar pilot, and including surveys from the volunteer groups and agency staff to determine its effectiveness."

Report

Online calendars are available to the free coffee program volunteers for the four busiest rest areas: the northbound and southbound Smokey Point, Maytown, and Scatter Creek Rest Areas. The calendars were populated with information that allows volunteers to easily see when there were available time slots. After researching various tools, WSDOT chose the Google calendar. The Google calendar application was chosen because it is free, relatively easy to use, and supported by Google. WSDOT web staff set it up and administrative staff were trained to use the calendar tool. The calendars were populated and went live in early 2020, a couple of months before the pandemic began. Due to COVID-19 safety concerns, the department suspended the free coffee program indefinitely and until we can ensure the safety of the volunteers, the traveling public and agency staff.

WSDOT will continue to use the calendars when the suspension is lifted. Since the Google calendar is free to use, the only cost was staff time in setting it up and minimal time to perform weekly updates. Early comments included that the calendar is easy to view and provides up-to-date availability, but many groups feel that they won't continue to participate in the program due to safety concerns.

Example

Calendar link: <https://www.wsdot.wa.gov/travel/safety/rest-areas/free-coffee-program/calendars/smokey-point.htm>

Smokey Point Southbound I-5

Today ◀ ▶ **March 2020** ▼ Week **Month** Agenda

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	7
Mar 1	2	3	4	5	6		
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
					(2:00pm) Lynnwood Emblem Club 366		
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
Lynnwood Emblem Club 366					(2:00pm) Sisco Heights Community Club		
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
Sisco Heights Community Club			(2:00pm) Sisco Heights Community Club Benneys Bunch				
	(2:00pm) Sisco Heights Community Club Benneys Bunch				(2:00pm) Horseshoe Grange Auxiliary		
29	30	31	Apr 1	2	3	4	
Horseshoe Grange Auxiliary			REST AREA CLOSED DUE TO COVID-19			(2:00pm) Horseshoe Grange Auxiliary	

Events shown in time zone: Pacific Time - Los Angeles + GoogleCalendar

Access the Smokey Point Safety Rest Area coffee service calendar from any calendar product that supports the [iCal format](#).

(Image of online calendar for Smokey Point Rest Area)