

Dept. of Transportation: State's newest Safety and Weight Enforcement Facility in Sparta officially opens

Posted on Friday, Oct 27, 2017

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Modernized SWEF supports the safe, efficient movement of commerce and motorists

Federal, state and local officials participated in a ribbon-cutting event today to officially dedicate Wisconsin's newest Safety and Weight Enforcement Facility (SWEF) along eastbound I-90 near Sparta. Technologies and design features incorporated into the facility will allow Wisconsin State Patrol inspectors to more efficiently weigh and complete safety checks on large trucks. Currently, about 2,800 commercial trucks pass the location on a typical day, and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) officials estimate that number will grow to over 4,000 trucks daily by 2027. FHWA funds covered 80 percent of the facility's \$11 million cost.

"Along with protecting highway infrastructure, this modern SWEF will support our economy by minimizing delays for ever-increasing volumes of freight traffic, while enhancing safety for all travelers," said Wisconsin State Patrol Captain Brian Ausloos. Features of the new Sparta SWEF include:

- Operations area with an optimal 270-degree view of the highway, ramps and parking area along with workspace and counter area for customer service;

- Automatic vehicle identification systems allowing pre-screened commercial motor vehicles (CMVs) to bypass the facility using in-cab transponders;
- Mainline (Interstate) and on-ramp weigh-in-motion scales that measure a truck's weight as it is moving. Trucks identified as potentially overweight are directed to the SWEF's static scales, enhancing efficiency for State Patrol staff and CMVs;
- An indoor, two-bay truck inspection facility with inspection trenches and brake testing systems to allow efficient and thorough examinations of a vehicle's safety equipment;
- 30 CMV parking stalls (including one parking spot for an oversize/overweight vehicle) along with 24-hour access to vending and restrooms to help CMV drivers meet federally-mandated rest requirements;
- A 34-person classroom allowing CMV training opportunities including cadets from the State Patrol Academy at Ft. McCoy;
- A backup generator and communications system allowing the Sparta SWEF to serve as an emergency command center; and
- LED lighting, geothermal heating and ventilation to minimize maintenance and save on utilities.

The Sparta SWEF replaces an obsolete West Salem facility built in the 1960s. Concrete from the demolished West Salem site was re-used as base-course in construction of the Sparta SWEF.

Workers from Handishop Industries, Inc. of Tomah handle routine custodial care at the new Sparta SWEF. This year marks the 30-year anniversary of WisDOT's Rest Area Maintenance program that utilizes workers from 23 community rehabilitation programs across the state to handle daily maintenance duties at Wisconsin's [13 SWEFs](#) and [30 rest areas](#). [A WisDOT YouTube video](#) shows Wisconsin State Patrol inspectors in action at a SWEF.