

# PORTABLE VARIABLE SPEED LIMIT (PVSL)

Work zone speeds are being reduced.

## THE PROBLEM:

When Utah raised the speed limits on many of its interstates from 70 to 80 mph the AGC and Utah construction crews raised the concern with the safety of workers, often working only a few feet from high speed traffic with only a barrel separating them. Construction zone speed reduction policies allow for a 10 mph speed reduction in work zones. A reduction to 70 mph (-10 from 80) left workers exposed to high speed traffic and an increased concern with safety.

## THE CHANGE:

Recently UDOT incorporated the Variable Speed Limit (VSL) in Parleys Canyon. This application made it possible to use that technology and legislation to utilize a Portable VSL (PVSL) for construction zone speed management. UDOT purchased 11 PVSL units that radar real time traffic speeds and averages into 1 minute bins. The system will round down the average speed to the next 5 mph increment and then subtract an additional 5 mph, setting the speed limit up to 10 mph less than the average speed. Application is limited to, rural two lane high speed (60+ mph) facilities and only placed in the active work zones where workers are on the road.

## THE RESULT:

Deployment of the PVSL requires a Traffic Engineering Order (TEO) to make the speed limit legal. The individual units record their latitude and longitude and what the posted speed is at all times. The most common reduction has been 80 MPH to 50 MPH providing a much safer work environment. Using the system in shorter active work zones has provided better driver compliance.

## WHAT'S NEXT:

A performance based special specification is being written so that contractors can bid the system into 2018 construction projects. Four projects have used the system and have had success with speed harmonization and increased safety for all involved.

*For more information contact Central Construction Group*

