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Multnomah Falls parking lot gate activated

The gate at exit 31 will prevent backups onto EB I-84 from the popular Gorge attraction

ODOT has activated a new gate at the exit from eastbound Interstate 84 to Multnomah Falls that will close when the parking lot is full and prevent dangerous backups onto the freeway travel lanes.

On sunny weekends in the Columbia River Gorge, the number of visitors increases significantly at Multnomah Falls, one of the most popular tourist attractions in the state. The parking lot exceeds capacity several times a year, especially on weekends, and cars waiting for parking spaces sometimes back up onto the eastbound I-84 travel lanes, creating a safety hazard.

The Oregon Department of Transportation has installed a gate that will close automatically when the parking lot is full. It is accompanied by signs announcing the closure. In addition, two large message boards will notify eastbound motorists when the parking lot is closed, one at Benson State Park approximately one mile west of Multnomah Falls and the other just before the exit to the falls.

In the weeks ahead, several nearby highway variable message signs will also automatically display a message announcing that the parking lot is closed. The message will also be available at TripCheck.com.

The first deployment of the gate is expected to take place over the coming Memorial Day holiday weekend.

The gate will close when the parking lot nears capacity, as measured by automatic traffic counters, and will re-open once the capacity declines significantly.

When the gate is closed, visitors will need to stay on I-84 and return to Multnomah Falls when the lot has re-opened. Visitor counts are highest in the middle of the day while counts are less in the early morning or late afternoon.

A small parking lot on the Historic Columbia River Highway is often full on busy days.

ODOT is continuing to study ways to increase the parking capacity at Multnomah Falls and other popular Gorge attractions.

##ODOT##