

COLORADO
Department of Transportation

The New Normal: Fire Weather and Xcel Public Safety Power Shutoffs December 2025

Agenda

- Fire Weather & Power Safety Shut-Offs
  - December 2025 Event
- Regional Impact
  - Pro-active Road Closures
- CDOT Region 1&4 Response
- Lessons Learned
- Opportunities for Partnership

Historic Wind Threat & PSPS Activation

Extremely Critical Fire Weather Conditions

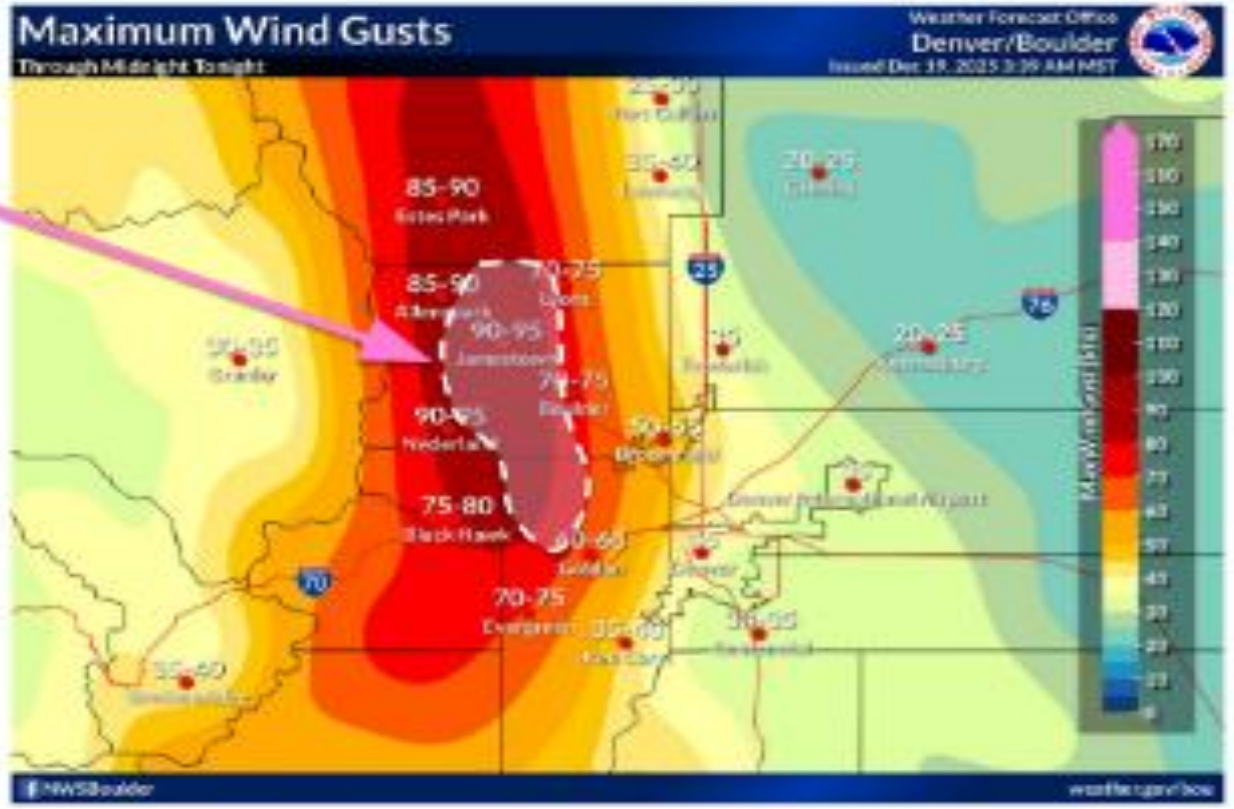
December 19, 2025
5:29 AM MST

Key Messages

Particularly Dangerous Situation

Foothills & along CO Highway 93 westward!

- **Gusts of 80-100 mph possible** from Hwy 93 corridor westward into the foothills
- Sustained winds, in the same corridor, of 45-55 MPH.



National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

National Weather Service
Denver/Boulder, CO

Historic Wind Threat & PSPS Activation Continued

100+

Peak Foothill Wind Gusts (MPH)

Catastrophic crosswind threat along highway corridors.

PSPS

Preemptive Power Cut

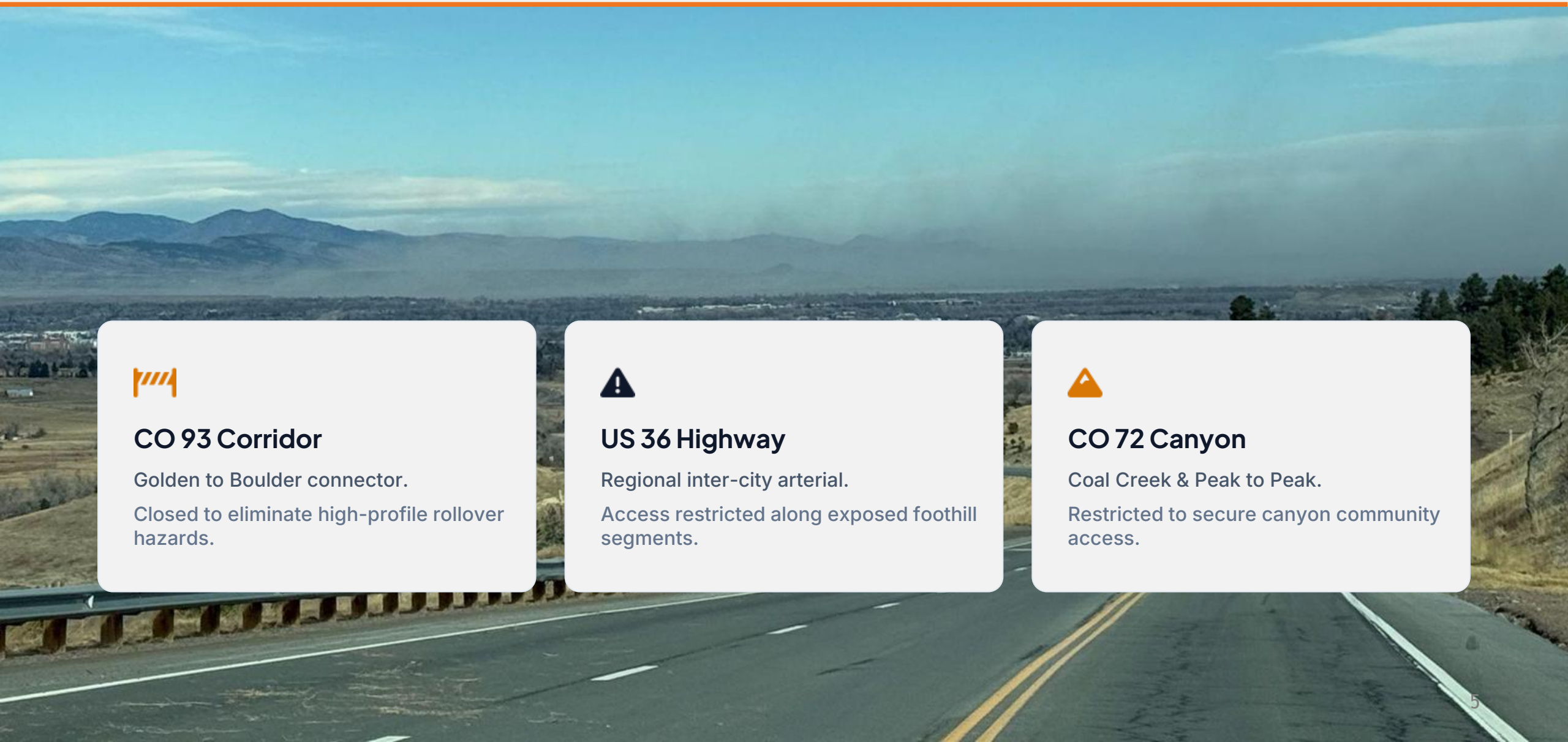
Xcel de-energized high-risk lines to prevent wildfires.

5

Front Range Counties

Simultaneous multi-jurisdictional infrastructure impact.

Proactive Foothill Highway Closures



CO 93 Corridor

Golden to Boulder connector.

Closed to eliminate high-profile rollover hazards.

US 36 Highway

Regional inter-city arterial.

Access restricted along exposed foothill segments.

CO 72 Canyon

Coal Creek & Peak to Peak.

Restricted to secure canyon community access.

Preserving Corridors for Life Safety



Prevent Vehicle Blow-Overs

Overturned semis block full lanes, paralyzing response operations.

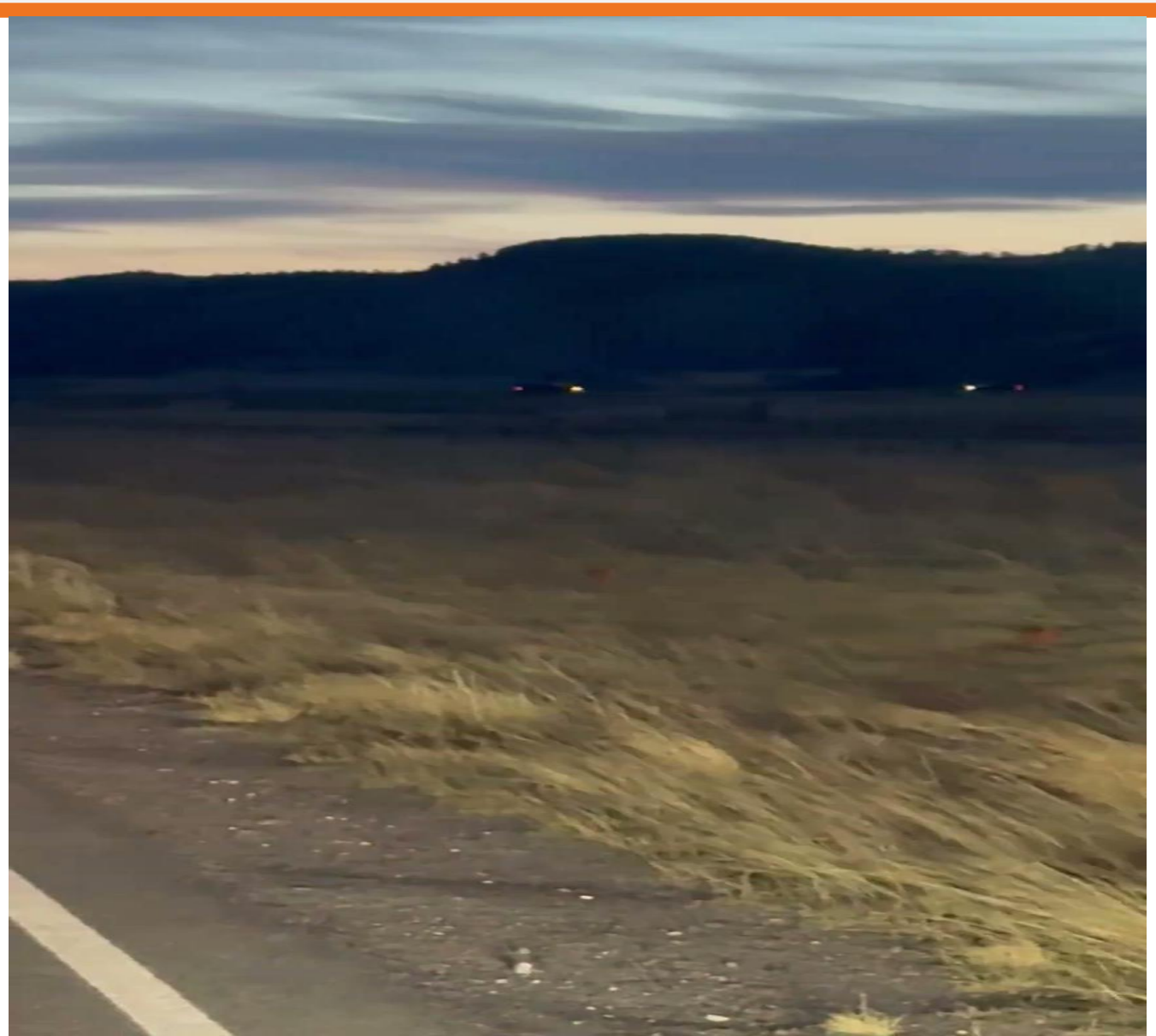
Protect Evacuation Capability

Open roadways allow rapid civilian egress during wildfire ignition.

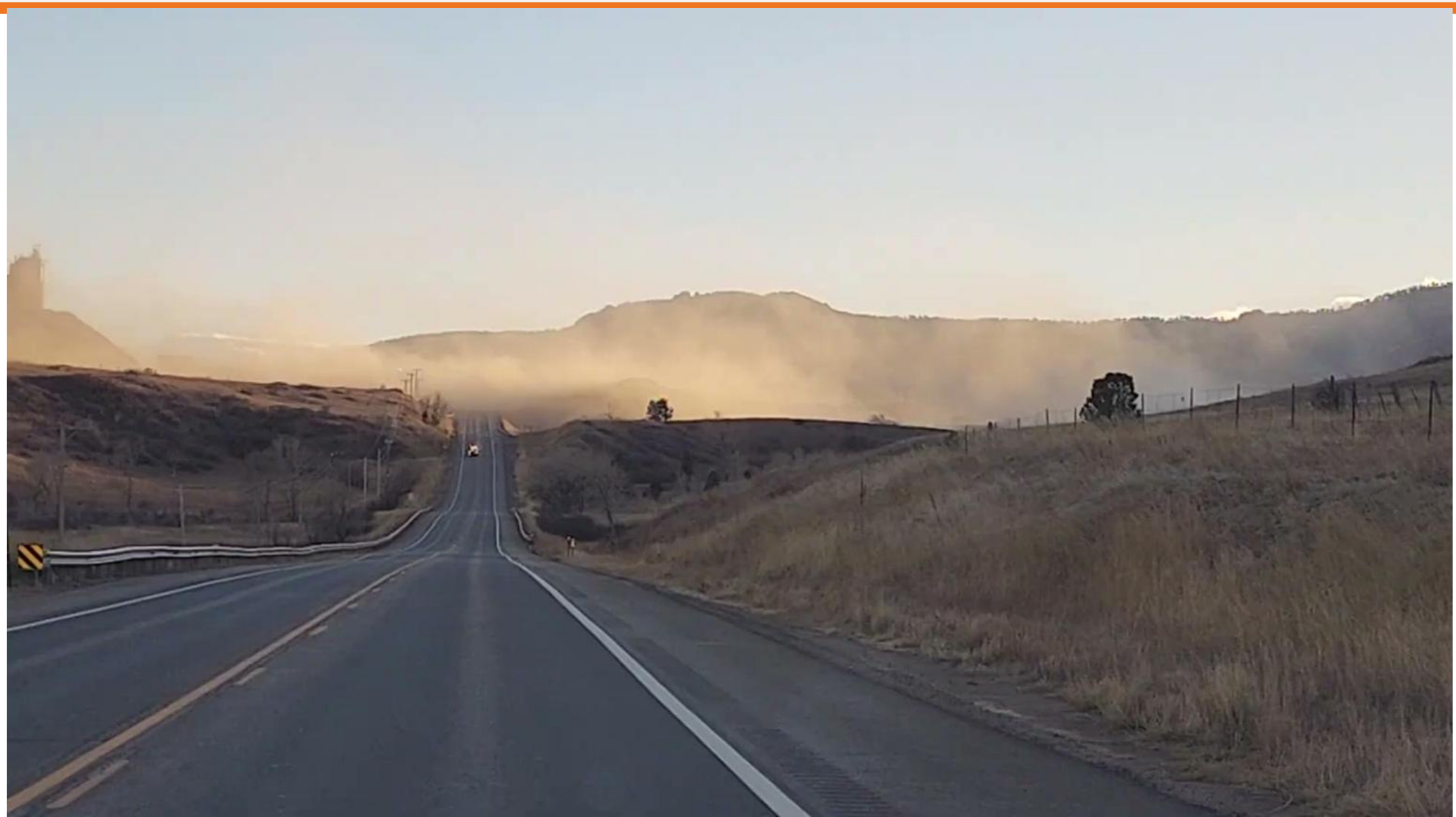
First Responder Priority Mobility

Guaranteed unimpeded access for fire apparatus and mutual aid.

Wind Conditions



Wind Conditions Continued



System Impact

- Pre-emptive Road Closures
- 10 Corridors in Region 1 Lost Power
  - US 40
  - CO 8
  - CO 72
  - CO 121
  - C 470
  - US 6
  - US 285
  - CO 58
  - CO 93
  - CO 391
- 49 Intersections Dark
- Power Outage Lasted 2- 5 Days

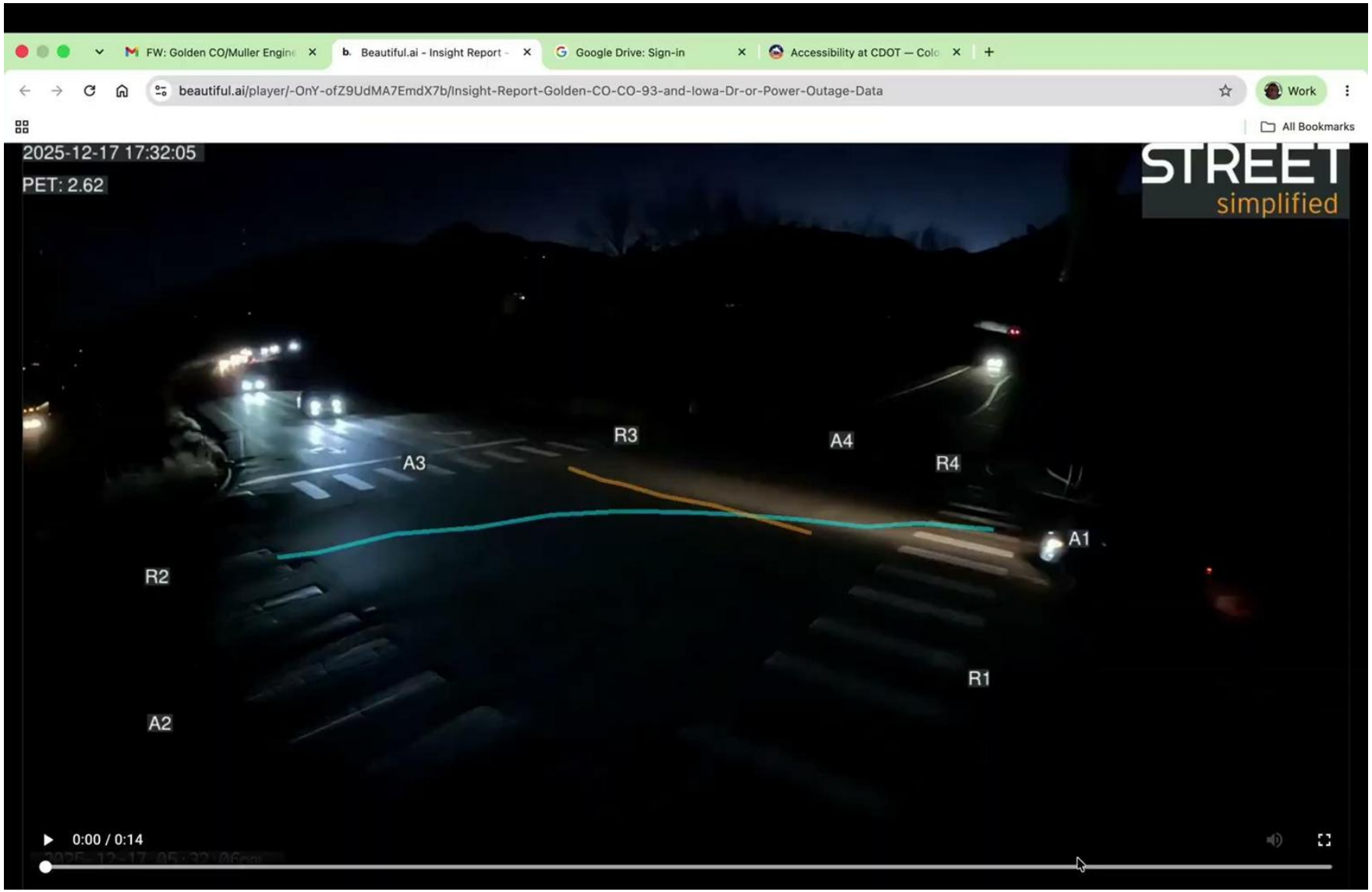


The Response

- Generators!
  - Started with 6, increased to 14
  - Placed at large intersections
    - Moved around others as needed
- Used EV vehicles to power signals
- Staff refueled generators, drove corridors



Dark Intersection Video



Lessons Learned

- Wind Event Signal Operation Plan
- Infrastructure Upgrades
  - Wind Dampers
  - More Durable Reflective Backplates for Signals
  - Solar Lighing Pilot
  - Reflective Tape on Mast Arms
  - Battery Back-ups
  - Prioritize Upgrading Span Wire Intersections
  - US 6 Tunnels Lighting Alternatives
- Staff Deployment Plan/Appropriate PPE
- Enhanced Xcel Communications



Opportunities for Partners

Sign up for High Winds PSPS Coordination Calls with CDOT.

OEMs engage to assist with real time coordination before and during event.

Municipal and County staff assisting with major intersection closures.

Coordinating important intersections for generator support, where CDOT asset are unavailable.



Thank you!



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