

CDOT Addressing Rockslide Area, Covering It with Serene-Looking Mural

Written by Cliff Hanger
Sunday, 05 June 2011

Answering Routt County critics who complained that the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) is doing nothing to prevent future deadly rockslides along the Mt. Harris stretch of U.S. 40 east of Hayden, the department announced that it's paying a local artist to create a "pleasant, non-scary" mural across the dangerous stretch of cliffs.



The move comes after a particularly hazardous spring in which a house-sized boulder nearly demolished a truck and its two passengers. The artist, Robert Boss, is expected to create a "wicked-big" mural to make drivers see and think of something else besides "a giant rock falling on your f-ing head."

"We see this as a major improvement for next year," noted CDOT Region 3 Director Pave Dover. "Instead of a threatening cliff face with unstable, massive boulders sticking out, drivers will see cute butterflies or maybe a nice flat pond scene--perhaps some cows grazing on a green field. And this will be at a fraction of the price of actually doing something about the rocks. A fraction!"

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It would cost millions of dollars to make the small stretch of highway safer, but CDOT only had to spend \$50,000 to cover the costs of a giant waterproof cloth and hundreds of tubes of yellow ochre and burnt sienna paint. Dover did admit that the mural would provide very little in terms of actual driver safety, but that perceived safety is a valuable commodity that shouldn't be overlooked.

"Out of sight, out of mind, right? Remember, fear is all in your head," added Dover. "And the only thing we have to fear is fear itself. Those are President Kennedy's words, not mine. Or was that FDR? Whatever. This project should go a long way toward eliminating the fear, if not eliminating the deadly rocks ready to turn you Subaru into a modern-art project. Drivers won't even realize they're in the shadow of death until it's over--and by over I mean either they make it to the other side or they're dead."

Artist Boss is hoping to have a prototype of the finished mural ready in the next few weeks, leaving himself several months to create the giant cloth mural. He said it actually only takes him exactly a half hour to create the smaller versions, but he likes to practice it many times to find out where "all the happy little accidents might live."

"Oh, there could be some fuzzy little trees over in the left, or maybe some happy little clouds will be floating along. I just don't know," said Boss, a white man with an enormous afro and a pleasant smile. "But happy driving, and God bless. You'll need Him."