U.S. Route 160 in Taney County, Missouri is one of those idyllic, hilly American country roads that motorcyclists love, due to its twists and winds. It’s also one of the most dangerous for road workers.

“It’s one of those roads you can’t be out in the middle of during the daytime. It’s so curvy, drivers don’t see you working,” said Mike Bock, Senior Traffic Studies Engineer at the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT).

“There’s also nowhere to park a vehicle—no shoulder or driveways.” This is hardly an ideal scenario for installing traffic equipment.
Until recently, each time the Southwest District was tasked with conducting a traffic study on U.S. 160, it took a team of workers to place counting equipment on the road.

Several workers had to stop traffic while others worked to nail vehicle counters to the road or lay tubes across the lanes. Then they had to orchestrate the entire process again each time equipment was moved, and again when the department collected more data.

“Standing out in the middle of the road to stop traffic is unsafe,” Bock said. “It takes just one driver not paying attention for something terrible to happen.”

Thankfully no one in MoDOT’s Southwest District had been hurt while installing traffic study equipment in the field, but the threat was real enough for the department to seek out safer alternatives.

“One of the advantages of the Android app is that I can ensure that my unit is working properly [without driving to the device],” Blankenship said.

Using StatTrak, agencies like MoDot can access the timely, accurate data they require to complete traffic studies without endangering workers or taking hours out of the field.

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