

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Yucaipa Live Oak Interchange Dedicated

By Jane Dreher, Public Information Officer, SANBAG

YUCAIPA, CA - "From little acorns do mighty oak trees grow," states the famous proverb. Likewise, sprouting from a small acorn of an idea has grown the mighty Live Oak Canyon Road Interchange and Bridge on Interstate 10 in Yucaipa.. The city celebrated the completion of its new \$20 million bridge on Thursday morning, May 28, during a ribbon-cutting ceremony. Residents and officials from the city, along with county, Caltrans, San Bernardino Associated Governments and neighboring communities were on hand to congratulate Yucaipa. The Yucaipa High School ROTC presented the colors and flag salute.

"This project has been a long time coming and we are happy this day has finally arrived," stated Yucaipa Mayor Dick Riddell in his opening remarks. "The concept of this improved interchange project began in 1995. Traffic on this section of Interstate 10 had increased dramatically with new housing developments in Yucaipa and communities east of us. Traffic was backing up dangerously on both the on and off ramps."

San Bernardino Associated Governments, or SANBAG, was the lead agency on the project. They completed a Project Study Report and Environmental Document in 1998 and the engineering plans were completed in 2002.

Then, the State Transportation Congestion Relief Program, or TCRP, which was funded under Governor Gray Davis' administration, was suspended from 2002 to 2005, and the project was put on hold.

After passage of the Measure I renewal in 2004, which is the county's half-cent sales tax revenue for transportation, the project started to come back to life.

By this time, however, the environmental document had expired and the engineering specifications had changed. This would cost the project both time and money. After a roller coaster ride, the TCRP funds were brought back to the project.

"At this point, the City of Yucaipa took a significant step and decided to advance funds from our city to the project so it could move forward," continued Riddell. "We established an agreement with SANBAG to get

reimbursed later with future Measure I funds as they became available. Our City Council had the foresight to recognize the importance of this project to our community and to the safe flow of traffic in the region. For this, I would like to thank our council members involved in that decision.”

The final design was approved in May 2007 and a groundbreaking ceremony was held in Yucaipa in September 2007.

SANBAG and the City of Yucaipa worked closely to monitor construction costs and construction management costs. In the end, the project came in under budget and on schedule, according to the timeline set in place at the start of construction.

The total cost was \$20 million, with \$9.7 million coming from the Transportation Congestion Relief Program and \$10.3 million from the City of Yucaipa and Measure I.

“This project widened and realigned the I-10 and Live Oak Canyon Road interchange, created longer and wider ramps, and added signals at the intersections on the bridge,” explained Riddell. “The two lane bridge is now a five-lane bridge with turning lanes. Special design elements include river rock insets cast in the concrete on the bridge and in the landscaped areas. City of Yucaipa logos are incorporated in several places. Sidewalks and attractive fencing were added, all of which contribute to the aesthetics of the bridge structure. The new Interchange symbolizes to area residents and motorists passing by that Yucaipa has a strong commitment to their safety.”

County Supervisor Neil Derry, who represents District 3, which includes all of Yucaipa, Redlands and regions northeast of the bridge, spoke on behalf of the SANBAG Board of Directors. He emphasized to the group what the interchange means to the people in his district and the entire region. “This bridge is not just embedded with steel and concrete, but it embodies the unseen benefits of safety, convenience, efficiency and the security of a seismically-sound structure,” stated Derry. “For those people who frequently travel here and who have had to exit and enter on this interchange through the years, I don’t think I have to point out to them the congestion relief and safety enhancements this bridge has to offer.”

Later in 2009, SANBAG will start the next phase of improvements on the I-10 Freeway between the Live Oak Interchange and the Ford Street exit in Redlands. That project will add another lane on the north side, or westbound lane, of the I-10 freeway. That \$42 million project should be completed in 2011, according to SANBAG construction reports.

SANBAG will also begin construction on other interchanges along the I-10 Corridor throughout the county. “The Tippecanoe Interchange in Loma Linda and San Bernardino, the Cherry, Citrus, and Riverside Interchanges down the road on the I-10, will all make vast improvements for I-10 travelers during the coming years,” added Derry. “The addition of a carpool lane along the I-10 is also in the development stages.”

On behalf of the SANBAG Board, Derry recognized the people responsible for the bridge construction, including Fluor Construction Management, LAN Engineering, Riverside Construction, City of Yucaipa Public Works and Engineering staff, and numerous subcontractors.

Ray Wolfe, director of Caltrans District 8, which includes both San Bernardino and Riverside Counties, spoke about the close proximity of the Riverside County Line to this interchange.

“I feel very much at home here, since I am in the middle of my Caltrans territory,” commented Wolfe. “Being a former bridge engineer, seeing a completed bridge such as this one is a real thrill for me. With my structural engineering background, nothing gives me more pleasure than to see design plans jump off the page and come to life. I am in awe over the wonderful workmanship that is displayed in the construction of this new bridge. It will serve the needs of today and future generations.”

Getting funding for future transportation improvement projects faces some major challenges on both the federal and state levels. In addition, the slowed economy will affect the money available through the county’s Measure I sales tax fund for transportation.

“Even though we are suffering a dramatic economic downturn presently, we know that the day will come when the Inland Empire will once again lead the State and many parts of the nation in growth,” continued Wolfe. “The financial burden coupled with the environmental constraints we must manage to deliver capacity enhancements forces us to look at ways to maximize our existing infrastructure capacity. SANBAG has been a good partner with Caltrans in their commitment of funds for the I-10 corridor. The value of this investment is ten-fold in that it helps commuters save time and energy, and improves trucking and access.”

Director Wolfe continued to outline a number of other transportation improvement projects from Palm Springs to the San Bernardino/Los Angeles County Line.

“We have big plans to keep people and goods moving through the Inland Empire,” he said. “Together, Caltrans and SANBAG will continue to seek ways to fund transportation projects in this region. Hopefully, the federal stimulus dollars that came to our region will stir up the economy and help provide other funds for worthy projects. Today, let us enjoy this new bridge and keep looking forward.”

After an official ribbon-cutting ceremony was conducted, speakers and elected officials entered their vehicles and were escorted across the new bridge in a procession led by the Yucaipa Sheriff’s Department. A commemorative “go green” gift of a living plant was given to each attendee, to symbolize the Mighty Live Oak bridge and future landscaping that is currently being planted around the bridge.

For additional information about SANBAG projects, go to: www.sanbag.ca.gov.

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