



Interchange

News and updates from a coalition of community and business leaders focused on the health and vitality of California's transportation backbone — **Interstate 5**



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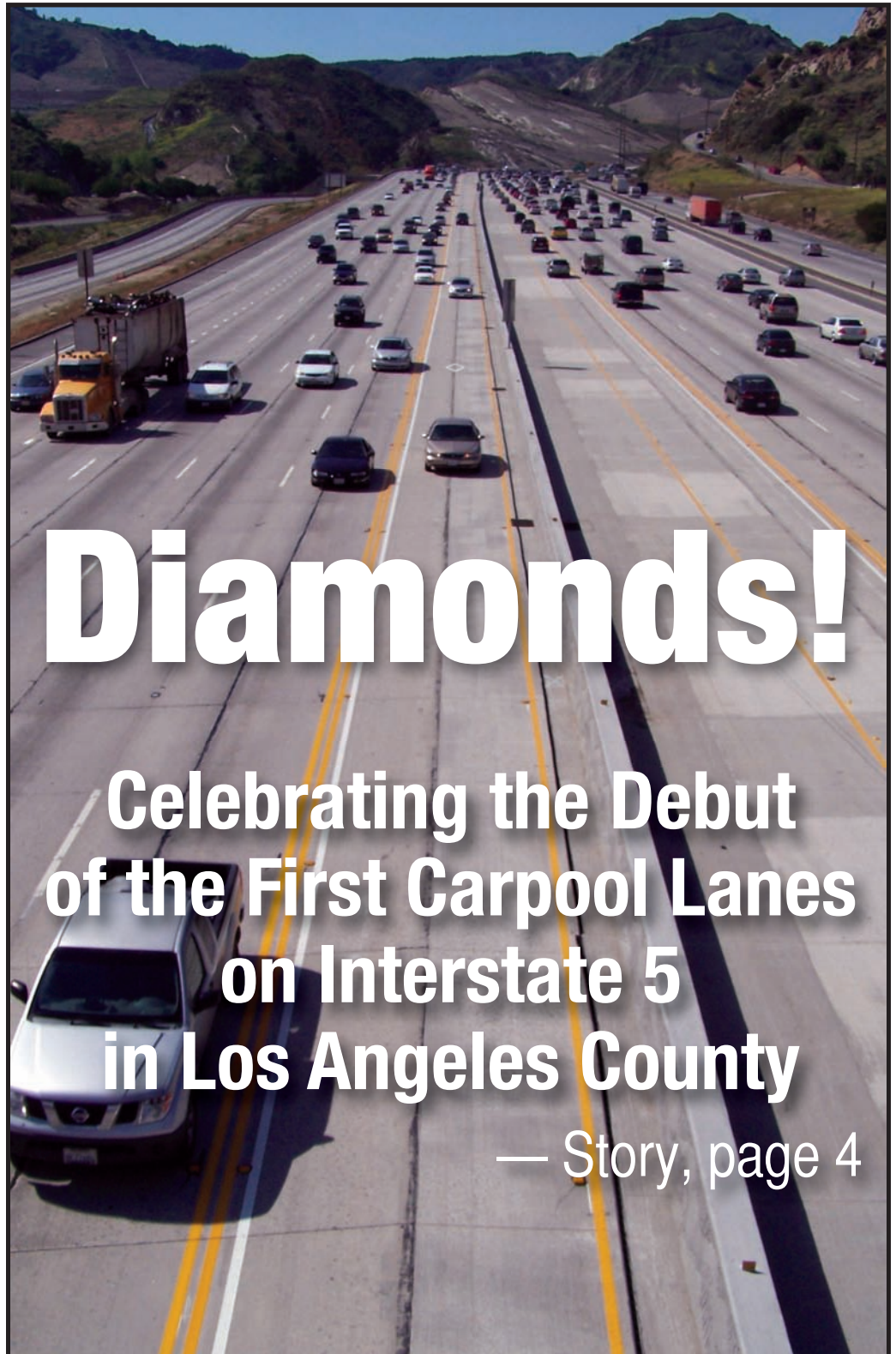


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Diamonds!

**Celebrating the Debut
of the First Carpool Lanes
on Interstate 5
in Los Angeles County**

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From the Executive Director

Who Says We Need to Improve Interstate 5?

By **Victor Lindenheim**
*Executive Director,
Golden State Gateway Coalition*

The I-5 Gateway Improvement Project enjoys the support of many “influentials” from both the private sector and the public sector. In fact, public sector leaders comprise one-third of the Coalition membership (see Coalition Leadership Council roster on page 9 of this issue of Interchange).

Their support reflects a common interest in innovative approaches to relieving traffic congestion, and improving roadway safety, air quality and goods movement in northern Los Angeles County.



**Victor
Lindenheim**

Their membership reflects a commitment to join with their private sector colleagues to take action and get it done.

In April, the Coalition and our allies made our case for trade corridor funding to the California Transportation Commission. We asked the Commission to program \$55 million — less than half of the total project cost — as the State’s share for constructing truck lanes north and south over the Newhall Pass. Here is a sampling of what was said:

“The differentiating factor between this \$110 million project and
See Lindenheim, page 9

Najarian Joins Gateway Coalition Leadership Council

A Respected Member of the MTA Board and Glendale City Council, Najarian Is a Welcome Addition to the Roster of Interstate 5 Supporters

Ara Najarian views Interstate 5 from a regional perspective: He recognizes that this stretch of freeway in northern Los Angeles County is not only crucial to the commuters who rely on it every day, but also to the entire regional economy.

“The I-5 is the backbone of goods movement in California,” said the newest member of the Golden State Gateway Coalition’s leadership council.

Najarian, a member of both the Glendale City Council and the board of directors for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, has joined the Coalition’s Leadership Council, a group of government leaders who have all put their support behind the Coalition’s mission of improving Interstate 5 in northern Los Angeles County.

The Coalition’s Leadership Council consists of a cross-section of local, state and federal leaders, including county Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, U.S. Rep. Howard “Buck” McKeon, members of the Santa Clarita City Council, and others. (See list, page 9.)

Najarian said his support of the I-5 improvement project is driven to a large extent by the impact the project can have on facilitating the movement of people and



Transportation Leader Profile

This issue:

Ara Najarian
MTA Board Member

goods throughout Southern California.

“There seems to be a misconception in Los Angeles County that only the ports area has truck congestion,” Najarian said, “and all anyone has to do is drive up the I-5 and they’ll see that the need for truck capacity is just as great.”

That heavy truck traffic in the northern portion of the county also has an impact on regular vehicle traffic, he said.

“The truck capacity is already filled,” Najarian said. “Every big rig is worth three
See Najarian, page 9



A Capitol Idea

I-5 Improvements on Agenda for Annual Trip Sponsored by KHTS, Assemblyman Smyth

By Bill Kennedy
Special to Interchange

It was a great way to start a week. Shortly after 7 a.m. April 21, some 50 residents of Santa Clarita Valley gathered in the parking lot outside the Chamber of Commerce building. Positive energy filled the cool morning air as individuals made the rounds to introduce themselves, eventually forming small clusters of people animatedly discussing topics ranging from their favorite weekend activities to the heavy issues of the business at hand.

The entire Santa Clarita Valley delegation (above) descended upon the state Capitol in Sacramento. Among the legislators who met with the group was state Sen. George Runner (below).



In due course, Carl Goldman of KHTS Radio announced "It's time to go!" and the group dutifully boarded a bus to head north to Sacramento. The occasion was the third annual Sacramento road trip, jointly sponsored by State Assemblyman Cameron Smyth and KHTS AM1220 Radio, supported by the Valley Industrial Association and the Santa Clarita Valley Chamber of Commerce. This intensive two-day event was

See Tour, page 11

I-5 Truck Lanes: A Chronology of Recent Key Events

■ Los Angeles, February 19 — CTC Public Hearing on Trade Corridor Funding

A team of prominent community leaders addresses the California Transportation Commission with evidence to support a request for \$55 million in funding to extend I-5 truck lanes over the Newhall Pass. Participating speakers: Glendale Mayor and Metro Board Member Ara Najarian; Santa Clarita Mayor Bob Kellar; Newhall CHP Commander, Capt. Steve Bernard, Congressman Howard P. "Buck" McKeon's District Representative, Chris Perry; Assemblyman Cameron Smyth's District Director Jarrod DeGonia; Santa Clarita Valley Chamber of Commerce Chairman Charlie Gill; Former Valley Industry Association of Santa Clarita Chairman Ernie Villegas; Santa Clarita Valley Transportation Management Association Director Connie Worden-Roberts; and Golden State Gateway Coalition Executive Director Victor Lindenheim.

■ Los Angeles, February 28 — MTA Board Sponsors I-5 Truck Lane Project for Trade Corridor Funding

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority Board, at its regularly scheduled meeting, unanimously agrees to sponsor and nominate the I-5 Truck Lanes project for a \$55 million funding request to CTC. The MTA Board is impressed that the project is a public-private partnership between Caltrans and the Gateway Coalition, providing significant public benefits,

See Chronology, page 11



The new carpool lanes, south of the junction of Interstate 5 and Highway 14, are the first carpool lanes on I-5 in Los Angeles County. Nearly 357,000 commuters use the I-5 and Highway 14 interchange every day. Below: Caltrans Director Will Kempton said he wants a California where people spend less time sitting on freeways and more time with their families. (Photos by Brian Franks, special to Interchange)

Commuters Rejoice



Transportation Leaders Celebrate the Opening of an Important Phase in the I-5 Improvement Process: New Carpool Lanes South of Highway 14

A measure of relief for carpoolers traveling to and from the Santa Clarita Valley has arrived two months ahead of schedule. The California Department of Transportation recently wrapped up construction of 6.2 miles of carpool lanes on Interstate 5 between the 118 Freeway and Highway 14.

“It is these kinds of projects ... that are important not only to improve mobility in California, but to improving our quality of life,” Caltrans Director Will Kempton said at a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the new lanes on April 4. “These new (high occupancy vehicle) lanes will save carpoolers about an hour per week carpooling and that is time they can spend with their families doing other things.”

The lanes, on the north- and southbound sides of the freeway, are the first carpool lanes on the I-5 in Los Angeles County.

See Carpool, page 5



Carpool

Continued from page 4

Construction on the \$41.6 million project, which began in May 2005, was completed in April.

The project was a joint effort between Caltrans and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

The latest stretch of carpool lanes on the I-5 is the first in a series. The next set of carpool lanes will be built on the I-5 from the 118 Freeway to the 170 Freeway and then on the 170 to the 134 Freeway. These two projects are expected to be completed by 2012.

"These projects play a crucial role in improving mobility for our entire region," said Pam O'Connor, Metro board chair and Santa Monica City Council member. "That is why highway improvements are a major component in Metro's long-range transportation plan."

By 2030, Metro plans to spend \$4.6 billion to expand carpool lanes, improve congested freeway interchanges, build carpool lane connectors and manage freeway incidents. Officials at the ribbon-cutting said the carpool lanes will encourage ridesharing, reduce congestion and im-

See Lanes, page 6

Celebrating the ribbon cutting are, above, from left: Caltrans District 7 Director Douglas Failing; Victor Lindenheim, executive director of the Golden State Gateway Coalition; Ara Najarian, Glendale Mayor and Metro board member; State Sen. Alex Padilla, 20th District; Caltrans Director Will Kempton; Metro Chair Pam O'Connor; Assemblyman Cameron Smyth, 38th District; Los Angeles County Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich; and Lt. Ralph Elvira, California Highway Patrol. Below: Antonovich addresses the crowd.





Lanes

Continued from page 5

prove air quality.

"This carpool lane project you are seeing today of course may be the first on I-5 in L.A. County, but it is certainly not the last," said Victor Lindenheim, executive director of the Golden State Gateway Coalition.

This project is just one step in the overall proposed improvement of I-5 in northern Los Angeles County. Future plans also include new truck lanes and carpool lanes on I-5 between Calgrove Boulevard and Castaic. The projects would cost an estimated \$507 million.

Assemblyman Cameron Smyth said improvements to the I-5 will also help the movement of goods and services through the I-5 corridor, which connects Northern and Southern California.

"As someone who travels this stretch of road regularly ... having this stretch open up is really going to have a great benefit," Smyth said.

In addition to the I-5 carpool lanes, sound walls will be constructed in various locations along the project area to decrease noise levels. Work on the walls is expected to begin this summer.

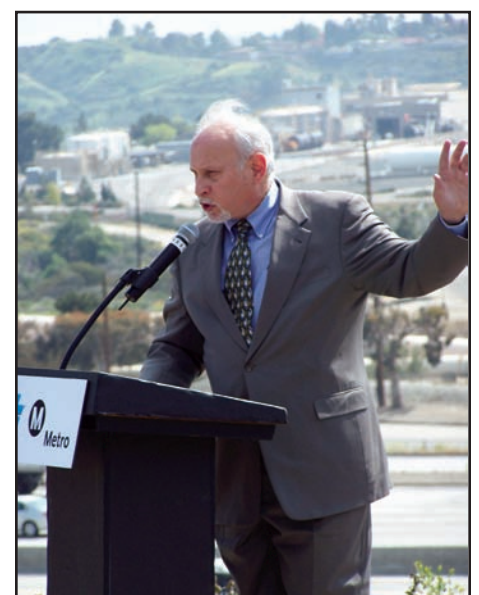
Above: Community leaders, elected officials and interested citizens on April 4 celebrate the opening of 6.2 miles of carpool lanes on Interstate 5 between the 118 Freeway and Highway 14. Below: Metro board member Ara Najarian said Metro and Los Angeles County plan to invest \$4.6 billion by 2030 to improve congested freeways.

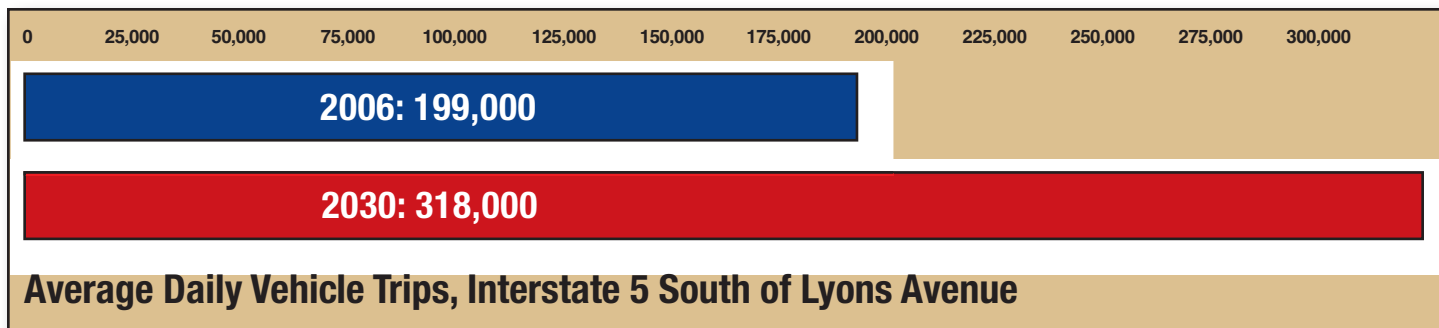




Building a Better Commute

Speakers at the grand opening of the carpool lanes south of Highway 14 included (clockwise from far left): State Sen. Alex Padilla, 20th District; Assemblyman Cameron Smyth, 38th District; Victor Lindenheim, executive director of the Golden State Gateway Coalition; Metro Board Chair Pam O'Connor; and, Caltrans District 7 Director Douglas Failing.





The Case for I-5:

Relieving Congestion, Improving Mobility

It just may be the most emotionally appealing reason to support the Interstate 5 Gateway Improvement Project. After all, who wouldn't want to spend less time commuting?

The addition of carpool and truck climbing lanes to Interstate 5 in northern Los Angeles County would enable commuters to do just that.

Even today, commuters feel the freeway pinch that is the result of an

ever-increasing number of vehicle trips using the same number of freeway lanes. From 1993 to 2006, the average number of daily vehicle trips on I-5 in the southern portion of the Santa Clarita Valley has increased from 135,000 to 199,000 — an increase of nearly 50 percent.

Yet, all of those additional vehicles are sharing the same freeway capacity that existed way back in 1993. If you think your commute time has in-

creased in recent years, you're not imagining things.

Unfortunately, without new freeway capacity, it's not going to get any better.

By 2030, it is projected that the average daily vehicle trips on that same stretch of freeway will increase to 318,000 — an increase of nearly 60 percent over the traffic volume of today.

It bears noting that a great deal of this traffic growth is going to occur regardless of what happens in terms of local development.

I-5 is a major California transportation corridor for goods, services and people, and this fact is evident when you consider the number of "through trips" that are generated every day on I-5.

A "through trip" is a vehicle trip that travels through the area without stopping here — in other words, a vehicle that is just passing through.

By 2030, it is projected that approximately 112,530 "through trips" will be made on I-5 each day through the Santa Clarita Valley. That's more than a third of the total traffic.

When you consider the fact that the I-5 in northern Los Angeles County is already near its capacity, it's not difficult to imagine the devastating impacts this traffic growth will have on congestion and mobility if nothing is done.

In short, congestion will increase and

See Case, page 11

Top Ten Reasons to Support Improvements to Interstate 5

The Golden State Gateway Coalition believes there are many great reasons to favor I-5 improvements in Northern Los Angeles County, and these are the Top 10. We'll take a closer look at each of them in future newsletters and Web site updates:

- 1. THIS ISSUE:** Relieve congestion and improve mobility
2. Public safety
3. To facilitate goods movement
4. Jobs and economic development
5. To accommodate growth in commerce and population
6. Air quality and pollution abatement
7. Energy conservation
8. Homeland security and strategic importance
9. Facilitate access to basic services: healthcare, education, police and fire department
10. Improve the quality of life for Californians and everyone who uses the I-5

Lindenheim

Continued from page 2

most others is that the project is requesting \$55 million in Proposition 1B funds and is providing \$55 million in private funding as a match for bond funds... (The) Commission's approval of the project would set in motion a new standard for the funding and delivering of desperately needed transportation improvements, which was the intended outcome when developing Proposition 1B and precisely what voters expected when they overwhelmingly voted for Proposition 1B in November 2006."

—State Senator George Runner

"...no project proposed for funding under the TCIF program provides a bet-

ter model for creating a new paradigm for funding transportation infrastructure in California than the Interstate 5 Truck Climbing Lanes, a partnership between Caltrans and the Golden State Gateway Coalition."

— Assemblyman Mike Feuer

"This is a highly desirable project that offers great return on investment, one measure being a dramatic reduction in hours of traffic delay caused by slow moving trucks. "

— Palmdale Mayor Jim Ledford,
on behalf of the North County
Transportation Coalition

"Public-private partnerships will be vital to the future of California's infrastructure maintenance and development... Further, this project will have

nearly immediate results on good movements... speeding the movement of goods to and from Southern California, reducing air pollution and encouraging more business due to easier access to our cities and ports."

— Brendan Huffman,
President, Valley Industry
and Commerce Association

As I write this column in a Washington hotel room, I am reminded of what a very capable Washington lobbyist, whom I greatly admired and respected, once told me: "In order to make your case in Washington, you need to sell the merits of your issue, understand the decision-making process, and be sensitive to the politics. Two out of three is not enough."

Apparently, that applies in Sacramento, as well.

Najarian

Continued from page 2

cars. The capacity fills up with trucks, so there's no car capacity – they're eating it all up."

With traffic projections forecasting only a continually increasing level of demand being placed on I-5, the picture stands to get more crowded if additional improvements aren't made to the I-5 corridor.

"If there is no relief provided for that area, it's just going to be like the rest of Los Angeles County where you can only go 5 mph," Najarian said. "So, it's very important that this project be built for the economic growth of the region."

Victor Lindenheim, executive director of the Golden State Gateway Coalition, said the support of leaders like Najarian is vital to the Coalition's advocacy of the proposed I-5 improvements, including new carpool and truck lanes between the Newhall Pass and Castaic.

"Ara is a highly respected leader, not only in his own city of Glendale but also throughout the Southland," Lindenheim said. "We consider ourselves extremely fortunate to have him in our corner as we strive to make the I-5 improvement project a reality."

Golden State Gateway Coalition Leadership Council Members

Supporting Transportation Safety and Mobility Improvements
in the Interstate 5 Corridor in Northern Los Angeles County

Congressman Howard P. "Buck" McKeon

Mayor Bob Kellar (Santa Clarita)

State Senator George Runner

Council Member Frank Ferry
(Santa Clarita)

Assembly Member Cameron Smyth

Council Member Marsha McLean
(Santa Clarita)

Former Assembly Member Keith Richman,
M.D.

Council Member Laurene Weste
(Santa Clarita)

LA County Supervisor Michael Antonovich

Mayor Jim Ledford (Palmdale)

Former Council Member TimBen Boydston
(Santa Clarita)

Ara Najarian, Mayor, City of Glendale &
Metro Board Member

California Highway Patrol

Bishop Henry Hearn
(Mayor, City of Lancaster)

Caltrans District 7

Frank Roberts (Former Mayor, City of
Lancaster & Former Metro Board Chair)

College of the Canyons

West Ranch Town Council

Membership Update

The following individual has joined the Golden State Gateway Coalition Leadership Council:

■ Ara Najarian, Metro Board Member and Member of the Glendale City Council

The Coalition is also pleased to thank the following renewing members for their continued support:

- Chiquita Canyon Landfill
- SunCal



By the Numbers

The Auto Club cites the following traffic facts in "The Road Ahead" (aaa-calif.com/corpinfo/transportation.aspx), which advocates for highway improvements to help keep California moving:

■ The average commuter in Los Angeles and Orange counties wastes **52 gallons of fuel** sitting in traffic jams each year.

■ **\$1.3 billion in transportation funds** were redirected away from transportation in the state's 2007-2008 budget.

■ **18,000 new jobs** are created for every \$1 billion invested in transportation improvements.

QuickTrips

A roundup of North Los Angeles County transportation issues and roadway project updates

Utility Work Clears the Way for I-5 Interchange Improvements

The city of Santa Clarita has provided the following update on progress for construction of the interchange improvements at Interstate 5 and Magic Mountain Parkway.

The rehabilitation of the Los Angeles County Sanitation District's main sewer trunk line and ExxonMobil's major pipelines are complete along Magic Mountain Parkway and The Old Road.

Two lanes are now open for both eastbound and westbound traffic on Magic Mountain Parkway. This enables us to expand our construction activities for the proposed widening of Magic Mountain Parkway and the realignment of The Old Road.

The utility relocation work is 90 percent complete. Time Warner Cable, Qwest, and Crimson Pipeline are continuing with their relocation work in the respective areas.

Please expect continuing intermittent nighttime work on Magic Mountain Parkway, between The Old Road and Tourney Road, for the utility improvements between 10 p.m. and 4 a.m.

The detour at the northbound Magic Mountain Parkway off-ramp and Interstate 5 will continue throughout the construction of the retaining walls, ramp widening and removal of utility lines.

This ongoing ramp closure ensures there will not be any additional detours needed after the construction in this area is complete. This work is anticipated to continue through August.

As a suggested alternative for access to the Valencia Industrial Center, please use the off-ramp at State Route 126 and Newhall Ranch Road.

Caltrans' traffic timing division is coordinating closely with City project staff on signal timing at Magic Mountain Parkway and The Old Road.

Detours and roadway signs are in

place to assist the operational needs of the public in this area. Please proceed with caution.

The city of Santa Clarita has also provided the following updates roadway improvements in the Santa Clarita Valley:

LANDSCAPE MEDIAN ALONG SAN FERNANDO ROAD

Construct a raised concrete landscape median along San Fernando Road. This median will be constructed in two phases. Phase one is from Oak Ridge Drive to Drayton Street.

Project Hotline: 661-290-2296

Current Status: In cleanup phase and completing punchlist items.

Traffic Impacts: Minimal impacts anticipated

CROSS VALLEY CONNECTOR GAP CLOSURE (CVC) , PROJECT NO. S1001, NEWHALL RANCH ROAD FROM I-5 TO COPPERHILL

Newhall Ranch Road at Copper Hill Drive to SR-126 at I-5: This project extends Newhall Ranch Road as the Cross Valley Connector (CVC) from Copper Hill Drive to I-5.

This eight-lane roadway will include landscape medians, parkway, and a Class I bicycle path.

A ribbon cutting ceremony was held on April 23, 2007. Work is continuing subsequent to the opening, including the installation of street lights, off-roadway drainage, and grading. This will require lane closures with minimal traffic impacts.

Project Information Line: (661) 290-2290.

Current Status: Southern California Edison is installing street lights and electrical service

Traffic Impacts: Minimal impacts anticipated

Tour

Continued from page 3

initiated in 2006 by Keith Richman, our State Assemblyman at the time, and the tradition was continued by Smyth when he later replaced the term-limited Richman.

We had a good cross-section of the community represented, with business people, government officials, educators, non-profit administrators, arts advocates, media personnel, concerned citizens, and the like. The five-hour bus ride on the way up Monday morning and back on Tuesday evening afforded ample opportunity for this diverse group to network, conduct business and share ideas on various issues. KHTS conducted on-air interviews of the participants, allowing the listening audience to share vicariously in the experience.

This annual trip grants locals a firsthand look at the workings of our state government while presenting to our elected officials a unified front on issues of concern to the people of the Santa Clarita Valley. On this trip, we carried three main issues: I-5 corridor needs, water policy priorities, and education budget concerns.

The section of I-5 that transects our valley is near capacity today, providing passage for some 73 million vehicles annually, 10 percent of which are trucks, the life blood of commerce. We need I-5 improvements to meet the needs of Los Angeles County's growing population, which is expected to add some 3 million people in the next 20 years.

A proposal for the addition of 11 miles of truck lanes through the Newhall Pass will help by providing expedited goods movement while alleviating commuter congestion. Our local transportation advocate, the Golden State Gateway Coalition, has formed a public-private partnership with

'We need I-5 improvements to meet the needs of Los Angeles County's growing population, which is expected to add some 3 million people in the next 20 years.'

the California Department of Transportation to complete the required environmental studies.

This arrangement should save taxpayers time and money on the proposed I-5 improvement project. Approximately \$62.5 million in private sector and federal funds has been committed to date for the project, but \$55 million more is needed. In Sacramento, we requested this project be placed high on the list of projects competing for monies from the Trade Corridor Improvement Fund.

Public participation in the legislative process — what a great way to start a week! A good way to finish it is to stay involved. I encourage all of you to let our legislators know how you feel on the major issues of the day. Government acts best when it involves participation of the people, right here, right now!

Bill Kennedy lives in Valencia and is a principal in Wingspan Business Consulting. He serves the community in many capacities as a Planning Commissioner, a member of the School & Business Alliance Stakeholders Group, and member of the following boards: Valley Industrial Association, Chamber of Commerce, and College of the Canyons Foundation.

Chronology

Continued from page 3

as well as taxpayer savings in time and money.

■ Sacramento, April 10 — CTC Trade Corridor Programming Approvals

At the California Transportation Commission's regularly scheduled meeting, 79 projects are approved for funding recommendations to the Legislature, for a total of \$3.088 billion. The funds are to be provided through a combination of bond revenues, SHOPP funds, anticipated federal grants and toll revenues.

Southern California, including Los Angeles, Orange, Ventura, Riverside and San Bernardino counties, receives programming approval for 52 projects, for a total of \$1.65 billion. The I-5 Truck Lanes project is not included in the programmed projects. It had been submitted as a "Tier 2" project, along with 10 other projects, based on the recommendation of the Southern California Consensus Group, a task force formed to determine regional trade corridor priorities for CTC funding.

In their public dialogue and deliberations, the CTC Commissioners recognize that there are a few worthwhile, ready-to-go projects that were not programmed for trade corridor funding. The I-5 truck lanes project is specifically cited as an example. As a result, CTC staff is directed to develop a process where such projects could be held on a "shelf" or a "bench" if and when additional dollars become available.

Case

Continued from page 8

mobility will decrease — not only for commuters, but also for the regional economy, since an estimated 7 million trucks already rely on the I-5 Gateway every year.

Help is possible, however.

The I-5 Gateway Improvement Project, which may begin construction as soon as late-2009, would bring new truck and carpool lanes to the freeway between the I-5/SR14 interchange and Castaic. According to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, these improvements could increase roadway capacity by 50 percent in the vicinity of Calgrove and the Newhall Pass.

What that means, of course, is traffic will be less congested and mobility will be improved — for everyone — once the I-5 improvement project is completed.

From the **Chairman**

I-5 Truck Lanes: The Right Project at the Right Time

By Tom DiPrima

*Chairman,
Golden State Gateway Coalition*

There are, and have been, many good and worthwhile surface transportation projects considered for funding from state sources. One of those projects, sponsored by LA Metro, benefits 75 million motorists and truckers each year by reducing congestion, expediting goods movement and improving air quality through a public-private partnership between Caltrans and the Golden State Gateway Coalition.

That “perfect storm” project, the I-5 truck climbing lanes over the Newhall Pass, should be at the top of California's list for funding and construction. Consider the following:

- The project significantly improves corridor mobility and enhances goods movement. Travel speeds today range between 15 and 20 mph during peak

hours. If we do nothing, travel speeds in the corridor in 2030 are projected to be from 5 to 8 mph. With completion of the project, travel speeds will be 45 to 55 mph, accounting for growth in commerce, population and traffic.

- The project will soon be ready to build. Environmental studies will be completed this year; construction could begin by the end of 2009.

- The project improves safety for cars and trucks alike in this highly congested international goods movement corridor by separating large trucks from passenger vehicles.

- The project will substantially reduce levels of airborne particulate matter, carbon monoxide and green-



**Tom
DiPrima**

house gas emissions.

- The project has one of the highest cost-benefit ratios (29:1) of any measured by Caltrans. This ratio measures hours of delay reduction per million dollars invested.

- More than half of the total project cost will be absorbed by the Gateway Coalition, saving California taxpayers a significant amount of money — more than \$60 million.

Funding and constructing the first phase of the I-5 Gateway Improvement Project — the truck lanes over the Newhall Pass — is a good deal for California. Let's do it.

'More than half of the total project cost will be absorbed by the Gateway Coalition, saving California taxpayers more than \$60 million.'

On the Web: www.goldenstategateway.org

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