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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## STATE AND LOCAL OFFICIALS CELEBRATE GRAND OPENING OF THE VENTURA FREEWAY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

**VENTURA** – Speeches at the Grand Opening Ceremony today for the Ventura Freeway (U.S. 101) Improvement project had one common theme: happiness at the project's completion and gratitude for the tremendous partnership required to build it.

The \$100 million project involved widening U.S. 101 in each direction from three lanes to six lanes between Vineyard Avenue in the City of Oxnard and Johnson Drive in the City of Ventura. In addition, the seven-lane Santa Clara River Bridge was replaced with a single 12-vehicle lane bridge. Wagon Wheel Road was reconstructed, combining it with the new Santa Clara River Bridge, and the connectors from Oxnard Boulevard (Highway 1) to U.S. 101 were replaced with a new diamond-shaped interchange.

“These improvements represent interagency partnership at its best,” said Will Kempton, Director of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), explaining that the State and the Ventura County Transportation Commission provided funding for the bridge and the freeway widening, the City of Oxnard funded the interchange reconstruction, and the City of Ventura accommodated five years of construction.

“Working together on projects such as this is the key to improving transportation in California,” Kempton added.

Other speakers included Senator Tom McClintock, Assemblymember Pedro Nava, Ventura County Supervisor Kathy Long, City of Oxnard Mayor Dr. Thomas Holden, City of Ventura Mayor Carl Morehouse, and Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) Chair Joe De Vito.

Kempton called the new Santa Clara River Bridge “a symbol of 21<sup>st</sup> Century transportation engineering.” Some bridge statistics:

- it is over 420,000 square feet--the equivalent of seven football fields.





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- Supporting it are 93 concrete-filled steel shell piles as long as 120 feet each and driven 120 feet into the riverbed.
- More than 40,000 cubic yards of cement were used to construct the bridge, enough to fill 4,000 cement trucks.

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“Caltrans expects the bridge to accommodate this growing region for decades to come,” Kempton said.

The combined project improvements will facilitate traffic flow between the cities of Ventura and Oxnard, provide increased traffic capacity, improve air quality and provide a more efficient and safer transition between Route 1 and U.S. 101.

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