



NEWS RELEASE

Today's Date: August 9, 2013
District: District 10 - Stockton
Contact: Steve Gonzalez
Phone: (209) 941-6562

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CALTRANS BEGINS BUILDING NEW ATWATER-MERCED EXPRESSWAY

MERCED COUNTY – Caltrans and the Merced County Association of Governments broke ground today on the State Route 99 Atwater – Merced Expressway (AME) Project, which will widen the San Joaquin Valley's busiest highway and provide motorists a new, safer route to and from Castle Airport Development Center and the University of California, Merced.

"This project is not only part of our overall effort to widen SR-99 to six lanes in the San Joaquin Valley, but as growth continues in the greater Merced region, it is essential that we build a new expressway," said Caltrans Director Malcolm Dougherty.

Phase 1A of the project will build the first section of the AME from SR-99 to Green Sands Avenue. Eventually, the expressway will be extended to Santa Fe Avenue, providing motorists a faster alternate route compared to busy Buhach Road.

The project will also widen SR-99 from one mile south of the Buhach Road Interchange to just north of the interchange. The average daily traffic volume along this section of highway surpasses 50,000 vehicles, and it is expected to grow to nearly 100,000 by 2030.

Crews will replace the existing Buhach Avenue Interchange with the new Atwater-Merced Expressway/SR-99 Interchange just north of Buhach. The new interchange will provide motorists safer access to and from SR-99 because they won't enter and exit the highway via the fast lane. Green Sands Avenue will also be extended to Gurr Road.

Phase 1A will cost approximately \$52 million and is financed through Proposition 1B, a 2006 voter-approved transportation bond. To date, more than \$16 billion in Proposition 1B funds have been put to work statewide.

This phase of the project will be completed February 2016.

###

