



NEWS RELEASE

Date: August 4, 2006
District: District 4, Oakland
Contact: Michelle Squyer (510)286-6115
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

State Route 128/Russian River Bridge Will Open Four Months Early, August 18

Geyserville – Caltrans will open the new Russian River Bridge on State Route 128 at Geyserville on Friday, August 18, four months earlier than scheduled. Caltrans worked closely with contractors, utility companies and environmental permitting agencies to reduce the time to construct this bridge.

The 1,000-foot long bridge was damaged in the New Year's Flood when the Russian River surged 25 times its normal volume to 58,000 cubic feet per second and twisted a pier out of alignment and settled it downstream.

Caltrans engineers immediately inspected the bridge and ultimately determined it needed to be replaced. The Department initiated an emergency contract to demolish the 1932 steel and concrete span and replace it with a wider, seismically stronger bridge that will withstand the flows of the Russian River. The foundations on this new bridge are 125 feet deeper than the 25-foot foundations on the original span.

With school starting August 24, students can easily cross the new bridge, which features an improved pedestrian and bike path on the northern side. Previously, students walked across the wooden deck on the south side and crossed traffic to reach the schools on either side of the bridge.

“Caltrans is thankful for the community’s support and patience during this emergency bridge replacement,” said Bijan Sartipi, Caltrans District 4 Director. “We heard the concerns of the community and promised to deliver this project before the end of the year.”

The loss of this vital route brought tremendous impact to the community when it severed direct access across the river requiring a 17-mile detour for motorists. Caltrans conducted extensive outreach with the Board of Supervisors, Sonoma County Department of Public Works, the Geyserville Fire Protection District and County Emergency Services, Sonoma County Transportation Authority, local, state and federal elected officials, business organizations and residents to communicate the progress of the bridge project.

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Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger proclaimed a state of emergency that enabled the department to respond to all of the damage caused by the storms, including the Russian River Bridge.

The Federal Highway Administration approved \$38 million in emergency funds to demolish the old bridge, build a temporary access trestle and construct the new bridge spanning the Russian River.

The bridge will be open to traffic in two weeks. Work will continue off of the bridge to remove the access trestle, clean up construction debris and complete landscape work until the end of the year.

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