



MEDIA RELEASE

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District: 8 - INLAND EMPIRE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Stimulus Projects Break Ground on the I-10 Coachella Valley Corridor

Stimulus Projects Lead to More Jobs, Improved Transportation and Cleaner Air

San Bernardino – The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), County of Riverside, Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG), Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC), Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, and all the desert cities today celebrated breaking ground on two projects funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act). Caltrans started construction February 3 on a \$25.5 million project at the Ramon Road/Bob Hope Drive Interchange Project. Riverside County begins construction on the \$17 million Palm Drive/Gene Autry Trail Project on March 1. These are the first two of five interchange projects that will relieve congestion along the busy I-10 corridor in the Coachella Valley.

"Today, I'm excited to see that our hard work to secure recovery funding was well worth it," said RCTC Executive Director Anne Mayer "These funds are not only providing sorely needed jobs — they are helping us build a better future."

Other dignitaries at the event included State Senator Denise Moreno Ducheny, Tribal Chairman of the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians Richard M. Milanovich, District 64 Assemblymember Brian Nestande, District 80 Assemblymember Manuel Perez, District 4 Riverside County Supervisor John J. Benoit, District 5 Riverside County Supervisor Marion Ashley, Caltrans Director Randy Iwasaki, and Palm Springs Mayor Steve Pougnet, who also serves as the CVAG Chairman.

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“Agua Caliente has worked closely with federal, state and local authorities to help bring this stimulus money to the Coachella Valley,” said Agua Caliente Chairman Richard Milanovich. “It took all of us working together to make this possible and we are proud to be partners in improving this beautiful and unique region of California.”

The Ramon Road/Bob Hope Drive Interchange Project, which received \$23.5 million in stimulus funds, will add a new I-10 interchange just west of the existing Ramon Road interchange. It will extend Bob Hope Drive to Varner Road with a new eight-lane bridge over I-10 and add new on- and off-ramps. Other funding comes from the Interstate Maintenance Discretionary Fund and the Transportation Uniform Mitigation Fund (TUMF). The project was made possible by support from the Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG), which administers the TUMF, and the Riverside County Transportation Commission.

The Palm Drive/Gene Autry Interchange Project received \$10.4 million in stimulus funding and will replace the existing two-lane overcrossing with a six-lane overcrossing and bike lanes. It is being combined with a project to widen the Gene Autry Trail Bridge over the Union Pacific Railroad. In addition to stimulus money, funding comes from the Federal Highway Administration, the Redevelopment Agency, TUMF, the City of Palm Springs, and other local funding.

“These projects are moving forward because of years of environmental preservation as well as funding for road construction that I’ve been involved in,” says Fifth District Supervisor Marion Ashley. “We made sure that in addition to improving transportation, we’re protecting our desert environment and conserving important habitat lands for endangered species.”

Over the next year, construction is also expected to start on three additional interchange projects along the I-10 corridor at Indian Canyon, Date Palm and Monterey. Indian Canyon is expected to receive \$5.5 million in stimulus funding. These projects will be followed by the Jefferson Street Interchange Project in Indio.

“These projects will reduce congestion, improve air quality and boost the local economy,” said Caltrans Director Randy Iwasaki. “We will continue to work together to improve the infrastructure in the Coachella Valley.”

“I have been actively involved in the I-10 corridor for years, first patrolling it as the Highway Patrol Commander in Indio and then in the State Legislature where I dealt with funding transportation projects,” said Fourth District Supervisor John J. Benoit. “These six major projects arrive at an opportune time, creating 2,200 new jobs and supporting hundreds more with additional benefits to our local economy.”

The I-10 projects are being overseen by the Coachella Valley Corridor Improvement Projects Taskforce, a coalition including CVAG, the County of Riverside, Caltrans, the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians and the desert cities in eastern Riverside County. Please visit www.i10cvcprojects.com or call 888-863-1757 for project information and commuter alerts.