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Motorists find relief with extension

By: *Matthew Self, The Telegraph*

A county supervisor, the director of county transportation and two prominent developers crossed the road ...

It's not the beginning of a joke. It's the end of a long wait for impacted El Dorado Hills motorists seeking relief in their trek to attractions south of Highway 50.

A collection of county officials and business leaders were rounded up for the official opening of the connection between Silva Valley Parkway and White Rock Road last week. The connection now allows north side access to Town Center and the El Dorado Hills Business Park, which is expected to alleviate some of the heavy congestion to the south at El Dorado Hills Boulevard and Highway 50.



Liz Diamond, interim El Dorado County Director of Transportation, addressed the gathering celebrating the official opening of the connection. Photo by Matthew Self/The Telegraph

"How many thought this road would never be completed," Liz Diamond, interim El Dorado County Director of Transportation, rhetorically asked the small gathering.

Diamond said the project was a result of cooperation from a host of partners, including impacted Serrano homeowners and the El Dorado Irrigation District. The EID took advantage of the construction to advance new water and sewage trunk lines that increase capacity.

Associate engineers Akin Okupe and George Jackson said the EID had not planned the upgrades for several years, but the existing lines were in the way of construction.

"We didn't want to break up the road (to install the lines), so we upgraded the capacity (before the road was completed)," Okupe said.

The final tally for the cost of the construction was \$2.9 million, with county taxpayers picking up \$1.6 million, according to county DOT numbers. The EID's costs accounted for another \$1.3 million. Serrano developers funded the project in advance.

County supervisor Helen Baumann (Dist. 2) hailed the extension as the result of the county's current emphasis on upgrading infrastructure and assisting business interests. The road rests on the northern edge of Baumann's district.

"This is the result of our focus of our dollars - your dollars - on improving roads," Baumann said. "We think this will be huge for the Town Center area."

It's a busy summer for Diamond, who is expected to host another road opening at the nearby connector between Serrano and Bass Lake Roads next week. Diamond projected the completion of an interchange by the end of the year.

Kirk Bone of Serrano Associates and Sammy Cemo of Cemo Commercial Inc. were in attendance. Cemo was the

initial developer of the El Dorado Hills Business Park dating back to 1983.

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