



TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION OUTREACH

A Newsletter by: Lake County/City Area Planning Council

Issue VII

Summer 2008

Roadwork Underway in Many Communities

A number of construction projects are scheduled or underway in Lake County. Drivers, as well as pedestrians, will welcome the improvements.

Clearlake residents are enjoying a smooth ride along a number of repaved roads, thanks to the efforts of Bob Galusha and Dale Nieman to complete the project design phase so the project was ready when funding became available. More good news arrived when the construction bids came in much lower than the original engineer's estimate of the expected cost, allowing more roadway to be repaved than originally planned. Caltrans allowed the funds to be spent on the additional work as long as it was directly adjacent to the original project. "Because of the low bid, we were able to extend the project further along Lakeshore Drive, and include portions of Park Street and Modoc, as well as a section of Burns Valley Road near the Senior Center," said Galusha. The project began in April and is scheduled to be completed in August.

At their May 20th meeting, the **Lakeport** City Council approved a resolution for road maintenance projects funded by Proposition

1B funds. The projects, planned for this summer, include paving the Second and Third Streets near City Hall, Forest Avenue, 16th Street, and the streets around the Lake County Courthouse. The contractor will apply a "double chip seal" - two layers of pavement - and a protective overcoating, which will help the road surface last longer.

The Lake County Department of Public Works also has projects scheduled. Downtown **Kelseyville** will see street improvements on Main Street between First Street and Gunn Street including sidewalks, lighting, raised cross walks and landscaping. Gaddy Lane, from 500 feet south of Loasa Road to State Street, will be resurfaced. Using state funds through the Hazard Elimination Safety program, a curve realignment project will be completed along Soda Bay Road at "Morrison curve."

With the project to "underground" utilities along Main Street in **Upper Lake** completed, the County will now construct sidewalks, drain-



Central Valley Engineering & Asphalt crews paving Old Highway 53 between Olympic Drive and Lakeshore.

age improvements, lighting and the arch that will span Main Street. **Clearlake Oaks'** Nylander Park, which celebrated a grand opening on May 31st, will have new curb, gutter and sidewalk. Third Avenue Plaza in **Lucerne** will also have sidewalk improvements. The improvements in Upper Lake, Lucerne and Clearlake Oaks are made possible through county Redevelopment Agency funds.

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New Public Works Director for Lake County

Brent Siemer is settling in to his new job as the Public Works Director for the County of Lake. Siemer, who took over the position in April, most recently came from the City of Eureka where he was the City Engineer for nine years; before that he was the Assistant City Engineer in Arcata.

Early in his career, he worked for the County of Santa Barbara where he was instrumental in developing one of the first traffic mitigation fee programs in California. His experience with transportation issues continued with the City of Arcata where innovative "traffic calming" measures were implemented, including roundabouts. He noted that his experience with projects implemented in Arcata "fits well with the efforts underway and planned for the Northshore communities through the *Highway 20 Traffic Calming and Beautification Plan*."

He also sees an opportunity for increased regional coordination to address the needs and challenges facing the communities in Lake County.

Siemer has ties to Lake County, through both family and work. His very first job, when he was in college, was at the Geysers. His grandfather lived in Middletown, and his mother currently lives in Potter Valley. Siemer and his wife, who both grew up in Santa Rosa, relocated from Eureka and are now living in Lakeport. All three of their grown children have recently married. When asked how he is enjoying living in Lake County, he smiled and said, "it's nice to see the sunshine."



Brent Siemer, the new Director of Public Works for the County.



Ceremony held in May to dedicate the Merritt Road bridge to all Lake County Veterans.

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Also planned for this summer is a paving project for the roads in **Riviera Heights**. Working with the County, the property owners voted to create a "zone of benefit" where each parcel is assessed a fee which goes towards the cost of the paving project. Other areas, including Riviera West and Buckingham, have also established zones of benefit to fund road paving in their communities. The County is working with additional communities considering a "zone of benefit" to improve their streets.

Caltrans is also busy in Lake County, with a shoulder widening project on State Route 29 near **Lower Lake**, and improvements scheduled for the traffic signal at State Route 53 and 40th Avenue in **Clearlake**. In the **Middletown** area, a portion of State Route 29 will be widened and lighting installed, and a project will begin to channelize the intersection at Hidden Valley Road and State Route 29. A "channelized" intersection is where traffic entering an intersection is directed into definite paths, such as turn lanes. For current information on road conditions along state highways, call (800) 427-7623 or visit www.dot.ca.gov. For all road projects, remember to "slow for the cone zone."

Transit Ads Offset Rising Fuel Costs

When Lake Transit Authority awarded a contract for advertising on Lake Transit buses in June 2007, the idea was to raise money to help offset rising fuel prices. In its first year, the advertising program has raised about \$30,000 for Lake Transit. While this is only a little more than one third of the increased fuel cost for Lake Transit this year, it is very important to help keep Lake Transit fare prices low so bus riders and the community continue to have an affordable transportation system.

Local business also benefits from the advertising program. Lake Transit Authority awarded the advertising contract to a local company, RAH Outdoor Media, in part because the company promised to focus its advertising sales on promoting Lake County businesses rather than competitors from outside of the area. Rick and Susie Hamilton, owners of RAH, have spoken with over 200 local businesses during the past year about the opportunity to advertise on Lake Transit buses. "Many of those local companies realize the benefit of marketing on Lake Transit

and have welcomed the chance to create awareness of their businesses throughout the Lake Transit service area," said Hamilton. Advertisers have been pleased with the response from the general public. Calls to RAH Outdoor Media from new potential advertisers have increased with the installation of more panels on the buses. "Even as businesses cut back on their marketing budgets, our monthly advertising sales continue to increase," said Hamilton.

Lake Transit Authority is also using the advertising panels to promote special offers like the Lake Transit Summer Cruisin' Pass, a popular program which provides those between the ages of 7 and 18 unlimited use of Lake Transit bus routes from June 1- September 1 for only \$15. Like many businesses, Lake Transit Authority has found that advertising on the buses is a very cost effective way to promote its products.

RAH Outdoor can assist local businesses with advertising design and production, as well as placing ads on the buses. For more information about how to advertise on Lake Transit, contact Rick or Susie Hamilton at RAH Outdoor Media, (707) 987-2623, or rick@rahoutdoor.com.

Lakeport Students Walk and Bike to School, and Health

In March, Caltrans awarded a competitive Safe Routes to School Grant to the City of Lakeport. The grant funds will be used to build sidewalks along Hartley Street, a major route for students walking and bicycling to the campus where four Lakeport schools are located. Construction is expected to begin during the summer of 2009.

In addition to the construction of the sidewalks, the Safe Routes to School Program (SRTS) includes elements to educate students about the benefits of walking and bicycling, as well as safety. "There is much more to the SRTS Program than just building the sidewalks and making other engineering improvements along the routes to school," said Tina Banuet, with the City of Lakeport's Department of Public Works. The City helped create a SRTS task force with representatives from the school district, the Department of Public Works, Lakeport Police and CHP, as well as parents. A survey of parents was conducted to help prepare the grant application. "This information collected was critical for writing a competitive grant application because it documented how students currently travel to school, as well as parents' concerns," stated Banuet. The survey revealed that more parents would allow their children to walk to

school if improvements were made along the route and safety training was provided for students. After the grant application was submitted, the task force moved forward on a number of efforts. Dave Norris, the Director of Transportation for the school district, was responsible for the "education and encouragement" portion of the Program. The result was a series of events, starting with an assembly for K-8 students. Held April 15, the assembly featured "Chipper", the mascot from the CHP and "Healthy Heart", the mascot from Sutter Lakeside's health education program. Together, Chipper and Healthy Heart taught the students about the health benefits of walking and biking, and how driving less reduces auto emissions, which helps keep the air cleaner.

On April 22, the following week, 465 students participated in the district's first ever "walking school bus" along numerous routes to the school campus. The routes, which included 16 meeting points where adults were stationed to meet the walkers and bicyclists, covered a distance of up to one and a half miles. Norris notes that a number of teachers and parents also joined the walking school bus. "We have seen an increase in the number of bicycles in the bicycle racks

since the event. I felt it was very successful and hope to do it again next year," said Norris.

The week of May 26th was declared "bike and walk to school week." On June 2, students participated in a bicycle rodeo organized by the CHP and Lakeport Police Department, and held at Lakeport Elementary school. Students participated in obstacle courses, learned about bicycle safety and rules of the road. Many local businesses donated prizes in support of the program.

For more information about Lakeport's SRTS program, contact Tina Banuet at the City of Lakeport at 263-0751, or Dave Norris at Lakeport Unified School District at 262-3022. Information on SRTS programs is also available at: www.saferoutesinfo.org.



Regional Blueprint Program Seeks Community Input

What do you think Lake County will look like in the year 2035? What will be the housing and business opportunities for the residents and visitors? What about parks, trails, roads and services? How will growth affect our environment? Soon you will have a chance to share your ideas for the future of Lake County in a series of workshops that invite your creativity and imagination to develop a vision for the region. The Lake APC recently received a grant from Caltrans to continue the Regional Blueprint Planning Program. The purpose is to develop a comprehensive, regional growth strategy with a 20 year planning horizon for Lake County. The goals include reducing auto dependency, providing an adequate supply of housing, minimizing impacts to farmland and habitat, and improving economic competitiveness and quality of life throughout the region.

The foundation of the Blueprint process is public participation and input. "Understanding the values and visions of the community members is central to achieving these goals and creating a "Blueprint" for the region," said Lisa Davey-Bates, Executive Director of the Lake APC. Through a series of workshops starting this fall, community members will have the opportunity to share their values and priorities related to transportation, land use, housing, jobs, the environment, and overall quality of life in Lake County. The program also aims to improve coordination between the various agencies and organizations involved in transportation, land use and other planning decisions that impact both individual communities and the overall region.

The outcome of the program will be the selection of a preferred growth scenario, the "Blueprint" for the region, to guide future planning efforts at the local level by the County, cities, various government agencies, as well as individual communities. For more information, contact Terri Persons with the Lake APC at (707) 263-7799 or visit www.lakeapc.org.

Poor Pavement Condition for Lake County Roads

An update of the Pavement Management Program (PMP) for the County and two cities is nearing completion. This project included surveys of all roadways in the County and cities in order to assess pavement condition. Pavement condition is scored using a scale of 0 to 100 (PCI), with 0 being a failed street and 100 being a newly constructed street. The pavement information is then put into a special computer program that recommends projects to best and most effectively utilize each agency's pavement maintenance budget. This program also helps each agency keep track of their pavement maintenance program.

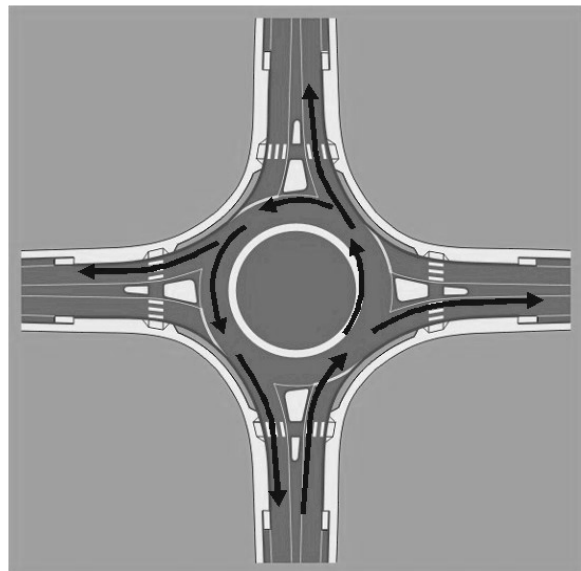
The results of the surveys should come as no surprise to those that drive on the local streets everyday. The County's overall PCI is 32, which is considered to be in the "poor" condition category. Lakeport's street system has an average PCI of 35, also in the "poor" category. The good news is that the City of Clearlake has actually made an improvement in their PCI, with a current PCI of 39. Although this is still considered poor, it is an improvement over the last survey conducted three years ago. This improvement is a result of recent street rehabilitation projects that were funded by the Lake County/City Area Planning Council. Upon completion, the PMP Report will be available at www.lakeapc.org.

Roundabout Considered for Nice-Lucerne Cutoff

On May 15th, Caltrans held an informational open house in Nice to review options for improving the intersection of Route 20 and the Nice-Lucerne cutoff to reduce collisions. The open house featured large posters depicting the proposed alternatives. Two alternatives are under consideration; one is a signalized intersection, and the other is a roundabout. The drop-in style open house, held from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. was attended by 24 people. Caltrans staff were available to answer questions and receive comments. Most of those who commented about the alternatives favored the roundabout. Some were concerned about how pedestrians would navigate the roundabout as compared to a traffic signal. Caltrans staff noted that pedestrians are generally safer in roundabouts because traffic is moving slower; pedestrians have shorter distances to cover to cross traffic lanes; and pedestrians appear directly in front of and prominently within the vision of drivers.

With a growing volume of information on roundabouts that demonstrate how they have proven to be a safe and effective form of intersection design, more communities are considering them. The modern roundabout has three distinguishing characteristics: They are generally circular in shape, they have geometric features to slow traffic passing through the intersection, and they are always yield-controlled for the motorist entering the roundabout. If a roundabout is selected as the alternative, it won't be the first one for Lake County. Lakeport has a roundabout at the intersection of Lakeport Boulevard and Parallel Drive which has worked effectively to manage traffic flow on "Hamburger Hill." The City of Lakeport installed the roundabout a few years ago, and drivers and pedestrians responded positively to the improvement.

Roundabouts are one of the traffic calming measures identified in the Highway 20 Traffic Calming and Beautification Plan completed in 2006. Once Caltrans selects the preferred alternative for the Nice/Lucerne cuff-off intersection, they will begin the design of the project. The current project schedule calls for construction during the summer of 2010. Mike Yancheff, Project Manager for Caltrans District 1, is available to answer any questions regarding the project. Mr. Yancheff can be reached at (707) 441-2097.



The arrows in this diagram show how traffic flows through a roundabout. Motorists entering the roundabout yield to vehicles already in the roundabout. Dashed lines show the location of crosswalks.



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What is the Lake County/City APC?

The Lake County/City Area Planning Council (APC) is the Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) for Lake County. The RTPA was established in 1972 by a Joint Powers Agreement after the Transportation Development Act (TDA) was passed. The Council consists of eight members – two board members from the Lake County Board of Supervisors, two council members from the City of Lakeport, two council members from the City of Clearlake, and two at large citizen members appointed by the Board of Supervisors. There are 43 regional transportation planning agencies in California. Some are single county entities, such as the Lake County/City Area Planning Council while others cover multi-county areas. Some RTPAs, similar to the APC, are formed as Councils of Governments (COGs) and deal with transportation as well as other regional issues. Initially, the duties of the RTPAs were to administer the TDA locally to ensure appropriate local transportation choices were made with the funds collected through the ¼ cent state sales tax. Over the years, RTPA duties have gradually expanded. In 1977, Senate Bill 45 became law and increased the duties and responsibilities of the RTPAs relative to the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The STIP is a five-year list of transportation project which is developed in coordination with Caltrans and approved by the California Transportation Commission. Current transportation planning projects of the Lake County/City APC include a county-wide Traffic Mitigation Fee Study, a county-wide Roadway Needs Study and Capital Improvement Program, an update of the Transit Development Plan, and a Pavement Marking and Sign Inventory for the City of Lakeport. Lake County/City APC staff also work with Caltrans, the County, and the cities of Lakeport and Clearlake to obtain grant funding for various programs and projects.

We're on the Web!

www.lakeapc.org

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