

# VIEWSLETTER

A Publication of the Transportation Corridor Agencies

SEPTEMBER 2016

## MEASURES TO ENFORCE SAFE DRIVING COMING SOON

In August, the Foothill/Eastern Transportation Corridor Agency's (F/ETCA) Board of Directors voted to implement a project to address customer and safety concerns at the north end of the 241 Toll Road.

During the evening commute hours, lines form in the northbound 241 Toll Road's two, right-hand lanes that are dedicated to drivers entering the eastbound 91 Freeway. Rather than wait their turn, some drivers bypass the line using the two, left-hand lanes intended for westbound 91 Freeway drivers (impeding westbound traffic) and, then, unsafely cross a solid white stripe to cut into the eastbound line at the last minute. This maneuver can be illegal, unsafe and creates delays and frustration for law abiding drivers.

This fall, the F/ETCA is working with Caltrans and the CHP to implement improvements. A double, eight-inch, solid white stripe with reflective markers will replace the current single white stripe that separates the westbound and eastbound lanes. The road pavement will be stenciled to indicate the appropriate lanes for "91 West" and "91 East" drivers. Additional regulatory roadside signs will be installed and changeable message signs are being updated to remind drivers to use the proper lanes. And, finally, CHP will more vigorously patrol the area for drivers who illegally cross the solid white stripes.



## THE 73 TOLL ROAD TURNS 20

What were you doing in 1996? Dancing the "Macarena?" Watching the hit show *ER*? Rocking out to Alanis Morissette's *Jagged Little Pill*? Trying to score the coveted "Tickle Me Elmo" doll? We were busy completing and opening California's first toll road.

The first seven-mile segment of the 73 Toll Road opened on July 25, 1996, and stretched from Interstate 5 in Laguna Niguel to Laguna Canyon Road in Laguna Beach. Less than four months later, on November 21, the road's remaining eight miles were opened from Laguna Canyon Road to the 55 and 405 Freeways in Costa Mesa.

The 15-mile 73 Toll Road boasts 10 interchanges, 65 bridges and more than 60 million gallons of bridge concrete. During its first year, more than 11 million tolls were collected on the road; now a mature 20-year-old, nearly 31 million tolls are collected on the road annually.

## SUMMER SCHOOL ON THE TOLL ROADS

For the seventh summer in a row, the Transportation Corridor Agencies (TCA) hosted college students for a half day to provide an overview of modern toll road planning and operations. Participants were undergraduate and graduate students from five Southern California universities with varying majors -- including mathematics, civil engineering, urban planning and communications.

The students were treated to an exclusive tour of TCA's award-winning wildlife fence along the 241 Toll Road and the 241/91 Express Connector project areas. They also had the unique opportunity to meet with eight TCA staff members to learn more about working in the transportation industry and how each position contributes to TCA's goals and initiatives.

The day was part of the 2016 Transportation Academy Program, a two-week immersion into different facets of the transportation industry hosted by WTS. WTS is a national organization of transportation professionals who are committed to excellence in the transportation industry.



## GNATCATCHERS ENDURE DESPITE DROUGHT

Recently, land biologists spent some 20 mornings at the Upper Chiquita Canyon Conservation Area near Rancho Santa Margarita surveying 600 acres of coastal sage scrub and looking for the tiny coastal California gnatcatcher.

The bi-annual survey measures how successful TCA has been at restoring and managing the open space, which is one of 16 sites set aside by TCA during construction of The Toll Roads.

Biologists found that, despite the drought and the presence of natural predators, gnatcatchers continue to remain in the restored landscape. All told, the biologists counted 11 single gnatcatchers and 40 pairs – 16 pairs had young offspring

The gnatcatcher sightings are great news for the ecosystem's health. The gnatcatcher is like the proverbial canary in a coal mine — its survival and breeding is a way to measure the success of an environmental restoration project.

Learn more about the site and its 70 species of birds at [bit.ly/2bE93mg](http://bit.ly/2bE93mg).



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