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Highway 1 projects in Big Sur reach finish line

By CHRIS COUNTS

FOR THE first time in at least four years, the coast is clear on Highway 1 through Big Sur.

The \$11 million Rocky Creek viaduct was officially completed Friday, Nov. 22, at 9:15 a.m., Caltrans spokeswoman Susana Cruz told The Pine Cone.

Located about 12 miles south of Carmel, the project site had been subject to traffic delays since March 2011, when a 50-foot section of pavement collapsed between the landmark Rocky Creek and Bixby bridges.

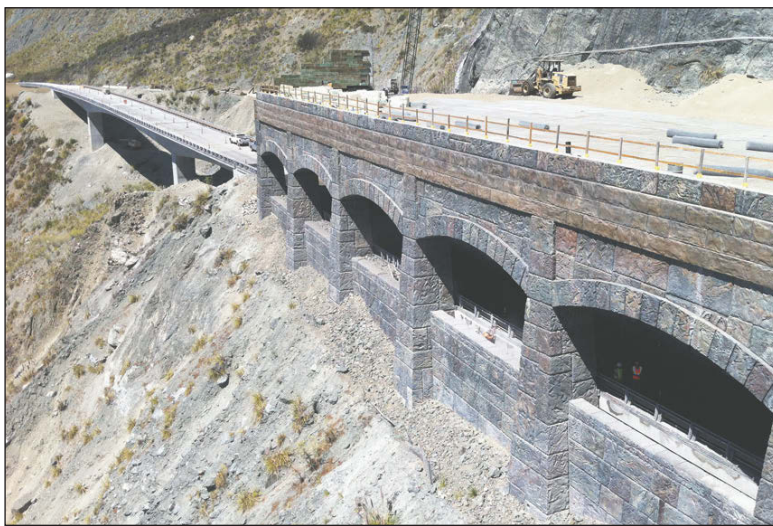
While Caltrans officials aren't planning to mark the Rocky Creek project's completion with a celebration, they are scheduled to attend a ribbon-cutting ceremony in mid-January just south of the tiny hamlet of Lucia, where the \$30 million Pitkins Curve-Rain Rocks project is almost finished.

The ambitious project is located about 56 miles south of Carmel.

A 620-foot-long bridge has been constructed at Pitkins Curve, and a rock shed has been built nearby at Rain Rocks, where tons of rock, mud and debris fall on the scenic highway during the wet months each year, delaying motorists and costing taxpayers more than \$1 million annually to clean up.

While workers still need to put the final touches on the South Coast project — which began in December 2009 — the last major work requiring overnight closures of the highway was completed this week, Cruz reported.

See **HIGHWAY** page 24A



PHOTO/COURTESY CALTRANS

The rock shed just south of Lucia on Big Sur's South Coast is completed, protecting motorists from falling debris and promising to help keep Highway 1 open during storms.

Mayor: IT investigation found big problems

By MARY SCHLEY

CITY EMPLOYEES received pay raises without authorization, provided privileged information to outsiders, kept encrypted files on their work computers, downloaded and used software designed to elude computer forensics and engaged in other questionable activities, Carmel Mayor Jason Burnett and councilman Ken Talmage said this week.

The details emerged as a thorough investigation into the city's 20-year-old computer systems and their use "is largely complete," Burnett said.

Their comments were the first real steps the city has taken to explain the disciplinary measures taken in recent months against numerous municipal employees that has caused a lot of uncertainty and upset among the public.

But Burnett said the actions, and the secrecy surrounding them, were necessary.

"Seeing the information that we've seen, if we were not taking action, that would have been a real problem," he said. Since state law gives employees extensive privacy protection, and because the investigations were ongoing, it wasn't possible to offer an explanation earlier, he added.

Neither Burnett nor Talmage would discuss any of the employees who have been placed on paid administrative leave during the past year: IT manager Steve McInchak, whose home was searched by police under the eye of CPD Chief Mike Calhoun and administrative services director Susan Paul in June; his assistant, Rose Franzen; and administrative coordinators Margi Perotti and Leslie Fenton, who worked in the planning and building department until they

Burnett, Talmage offer first details about disciplinary actions

See **STAFF** page 24A

Motorcycle cop, a fixture in town, retiring after 30 years

But you'll still see him around

By MARY SCHLEY

COUNTLESS KIDS have heard his stern reprimands and gentle reminders, whether while stopped on a downtown street for running a stop sign, or in one of the DARE classes he taught for 20 years. Thousands of motorists have been directed or led by him in Concours Week parades, and he's a vital part of every city event that requires traffic control or organization. Cpl. Steve Rana, Carmel P.D.'s motorcycle cop and a member of the force for three decades, is retiring at the end of the year.

Born and raised in Fresno — "It's a great place to be from," he said — Rana became interested in police work after a friend

of his parents who was a California Highway Patrol officer gave him a leather-bound copy of the California Vehicle Code to read.

"The laws, I found interesting," he said.

He took administration of justice classes at Fresno City College and started his career in Fresno in January 1976 as a cadet, promoting to police officer a few years later.

See **COP** page 26A

Monterey PD arrests two for possessing C.V. loot

PINE CONE STAFF REPORT

A SERIES of arrests by the Monterey Police Department last weekend not only solved a string of drug, identity theft and property crimes in that city, it may also have produced a break in the plague of burglaries that have hit Carmel Valley.

On Friday, Monterey police officers conducted a probation search at a hotel room in Seaside and arrested Alison Davi, 21, and Marcus Colello, 22, for possession of meth and heroin for sale, possession of narcotic paraphernalia, conspiracy and possession of stolen property. "The stolen property is linked to recent burglaries in Carmel Valley," according to Monterey police spokesperson Leslie Sonne.

Later that night, Jeffrey Hertling, 38, and Michael Perkun, 43, were arrested in Monterey, also on charges of possessing narcotics and stolen property, including a car reported stolen in Seaside and "property believed to be from recent resident burglaries," Sonne said. Recovered property included jewelry, electronics, and a high-end bicycle, she added.

Last week, about 400 Carmel Valley residents attended a community meeting hosted by Monterey County Sheriff Scott Miller to express their concern over the numerous break-ins of houses and cars that have occurred in their community.

CARMEL VALLEY HISTORY MUSEUM READY TO OPEN

By CHRIS COUNTS

NEARLY FIVE years after construction began on the Carmel Valley History Center, the museum celebrates its grand opening Saturday, Dec. 7.

The Carmel Valley Historical Society will unveil the 2,400-square-foot building and its contents in a ribbon-cutting ceremony from 2 to 4 p.m. Ellsworth Gregory, who served as president of the historical society for 17 years, will cut the ribbon.

To build the museum, \$600,000 was raised through donations, fundraisers and grants from taxpayers. A donor tile project alone netted \$50,000.

"A lot of people gave whatever they could — from \$10, to thousands of dollars," said Reggie Jones, president of the historical society. "We're grateful to a large cross-section of people for their support."

On display at the museum will be its first three exhibits, each offering visitors a window in the valley's rich and colorful past.

The first exhibit, curated by Donna Zahn, focuses on the valley's oldest human inhabitants, the Rumsen and Esselen Native American tribes.

"The Rumsen lived between the mouth of the valley and about 20 miles up the valley, while the Esselen lived in the mountains and along the Big Sur coast," Jones explained. "We have mortars and pestles for grinding acorns, bow and arrows, a lot of original arrowheads, and small stone tools. We also have a reproduction of a boat that was used by indians along the Carmel River. It was made out of tule reeds by Linda Yamane, who is descended from the Rumsen tribe."



PHOTO/COURTESY CARMEL VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Bob Mattson shows off Leo Berta's 80-year-old saddle, which will be displayed at the Carmel Valley History Center.

See **MUSEUM** page 24A