



West Valley VIEW

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Phone (623) 535-8439

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Cotton Bridge to open Wednesday

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Goodyear residents in Estrella will finally have a second route out of the 20,000-acre community.

Roberta J. Crowe, public information officer with the Maricopa County Department of Transportation, announced Nov. 21 that the Cotton Lane Bridge will open at 5 a.m. Wednesday.

Beginning Wednesday, the more than 10,000 residents of Estrella will be able to drive north on Cotton Lane to Loop 303 or Interstate 10.

Previously, residents were only able to enter and leave the community using Estrella Parkway.

Estrella resident Linda Veen said having the bridge open will cut at least 10 minutes from her morning commute to work.

"Residents in Estrella wanted that second outlet and now they got it," Goodyear Mayor Jim Cavanaugh said. "It's an important event getting the bridge open."

So important that Cavanaugh will take part in an invitation-only event at 10 a.m. Nov. 25. Also expected on hand will be Mary Rose Wilcox, Maricopa County Supervisor for District 5.

The \$24 million bridge is being opened two months ahead of schedule and under budget, Crowe said.

The first construction phase of the bridge broke ground in September 2006 and was completed during the summer.

The first phase included the construction of a four-lane road; the half-mile-long bridge that crosses the Gila River; bike lanes and a sidewalk on the bridge; and the roundabout at the intersection of MC85 and Estrella Parkway.

The second construction phase began this summer and was done by the Ellman Cos. as part of the proposed King Ranch development.

The second phase was a 1.6-mile, two-lane segment of Cotton Lane south of the bridge.

Now that all the pieces are done, traffic will be allowed to travel all the phases beginning at 5 a.m. Wednesday.

The bridge itself was called "a work of art" by Cavanaugh. The bridge features 4-foot-wide geckos etched in concrete on its sides. The bridge's columns have copper-tinted paint and the way it was applied makes it look like salt water deposits.

The bridge also features benches every 120 feet in the walkway for rest or to view the bats at sunset and sunrise.

Why will bats be there? Because the bridge has four bat lodges underneath.

Maricopa County Department of Transportation project manager Bill Hahn told the *View* back in 2007 that "we're going a bit batty."

Bats are a major predator to such insects as mosquitoes, moths and beetles. One bat can catch hundreds of insects in an hour.

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