

Cotton Lane improvements help traffic

By **Brent Whiting** - May. 19, 2008 10:54 AM
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Progress was reported Monday on a \$59 million project to improve traffic flows in the Southwest Valley, including a new signal at Maricopa County 85 and Cotton Lane.

That signal, along with an upgraded intersection, is expected to be operational by the end of this month, said Roberta Crowe, a spokeswoman for the Maricopa County Department of Transportation.

At issue in the overall project is the extension of Cotton Lane along a 3.25-mile stretch from MC 85 to Estrella Parkway.

One of the main components of the job, a new six-lane bridge over the Gila River, has been finished, Crowe said.

However, the half-mile bridge, complete with bike lanes and sidewalk, isn't scheduled to be opened to traffic until January, Crowe said.

That's when Goodyear is expected to complete work on a 1.6-mile stretch of Cotton Lane from the bridge south to Estrella Parkway, she said.

In the meantime, the 1.15-mile length of Cotton Lane from MC 85 south to the bridge has been opened to traffic, but the roadway is closed at the north end of the span, she said.

The goal of the Cotton Lane project, a joint effort between the county and Goodyear, is to improve the flow of traffic through the area, officials said.

In addition, officials want to reduce congestion on Estrella Parkway and provide more access points for developments planned south of the river.

A groundbreaking ceremony for the new bridge was held in September 2006.

Officials said the span was needed to move traffic toward the southern end of Goodyear.

Much of the city is north of Interstate 10, but more of the city growth is south of the freeway, including existing and planned master-planned communities.