

Happy Valley Road extension to open Monday

by **Michael Senft** - Dec. 17, 2008 07:00 AM
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After five years of planning and 11 months of construction, north Peoria residents will get some relief to their commute when the first phase of Happy Valley Road's west extension opens for drivers Monday.

The mile-long stretch between Terramar Boulevard and 83rd Avenue features six lanes of traffic and a bridge across New River.

When the project is completed in 2009, Happy Valley will extend to Lake Pleasant Parkway.

According to project manager Chris Kmetty, the road is a vital connection between north Peoria residents and the rest of the Valley.

"Right now, there are only two bridges across the New River - Jomax Road and Deer Valley Road," he said. "This will also connect the area with Loop 303."

To celebrate the opening, Peoria is holding a free ribbon-cutting ceremony at 10 a.m. Saturday. Visitors are invited to walk and bike the new stretch of road.

"It's sort of like the events that the Department of Transportation holds when a new freeway is opened," said Kmetty. "But it also like a street fair."

In addition to the ribbon-cutting and walk, the ceremony will have fun for all ages. Kids can enjoy hands-on views of construction equipment, bounce houses and even a visit from Santa.

Representatives from more than 30 businesses will be on hand as part of the city's Peoria First program, which encourages residents to patronize local businesses.

"We are going to have booths set up where visitors can learn about local businesses in Peoria. There will be giveaways and other information about the importance of shopping local, said Kmetty. "We want people to have fun on the new road and meet local businesses."

The ceremony and fair will be held at the eastern end of the new segment, at Terramar Boulevard. Visitors should park at Christ's Church of the Valley, 7007 W. Happy Valley Road.

Details: www.peoriaaz.gov.