



THE SAN FRANCISCO-OAKLAND BAY BRIDGE SEISMIC SAFETY PROJECTS

CALTRANS

BAY AREA TOLL AUTHORITY

CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

EMERGENCY REPAIR AND DETOUR CONNECTION COMPLETED ON BAY BRIDGE

BRIDGE REOPENED AFTER CREWS LABORED THROUGHOUT WEEKEND

Oakland, Calif., Sept. 8, 2009 – The San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge reopened at 7 a.m. after crews worked nearly 70 hours to repair a damaged steel beam that was discovered during the Labor Day weekend closure. The bridge was initially closed so workers could cut and slide out a 300-foot-long, 3,200-ton double-deck section of the East Span, 150-feet above Yerba Buena Island (YBI). A new 3,600-ton double-deck section was moved into place to connect the bridge to a short detour.

During the closure, Caltrans conducted a regularly scheduled inspection, at which time a crack was found on a structural steel beam on the East Span; the damage was not related to the weekend's scheduled construction. Caltrans conducts thorough inspections every two years as mandated by federal law.

Transportation leaders estimated that the damage would be repaired and the bridge would be able to reopen by 5 a.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 9. However, crews worked throughout the night, and were able to make the repairs much faster than anticipated. The bridge reopened 22 hours ahead of the adjusted opening schedule.

“Thanks to the exceptional teamwork and dedication of the workers, we are able to open the bridge Tuesday morning,” said Caltrans Director Randell Iwasaki. “The bridge has been inspected and it is now safer than when we closed it on Thursday. I want to personally thank the dedicated design team and the contractor CC Myers and its subcontractors. Without their partnership, this reopening would not have happened. It would have taken much longer. We would also like to thank the Bay Area for its patience. We know it has been trying. Thank you for your support and understanding during this effort.”

The single eyebar is part of a system of eight eyebars, which had been absorbing much of the damaged piece's load. Crews detected the crack in the eyebar on Saturday and immediately began designing a solution. Instead of replacing the eyebar, engineers designed a system that would place high-tension steel rods around the eyebars to redistribute the load evenly.

Transportation leaders also hailed the essential work on the Yerba Buena Island detour, which represented unprecedented construction that necessitated the closure of the bridge.

“We could not be happier with the successful completion of the detour,” said Bay Area Toll Authority (BATA) Executive Director Steve Heminger.

“This weekend’s success would not have been possible without the efforts of the hundreds of dedicated workers” added Iwasaki. “We also want to thank Caltrans’ partners at the Bay Area Toll Authority and California Transportation Commission (CTC), the California Highway Patrol, and the numerous transit agencies that helped get residents and visitors around the Bay Area. We take great pride that the Bay Area remained mobile despite a few hot spots of traffic in San Francisco, Marin County and at the San Mateo Bridge.”

As drivers resumed use of the Bay Bridge on Tuesday, the detour east of the YBI tunnel routed vehicles south so crews could demolish the existing viaduct and build a connector to the new East Span. Motorists will need to slow down to an enforced 40-mph speed limit, due to curves in the roadway. Vehicles will use the detour until the new East Span opens to traffic in 2013.

The other change is at the Toll Plaza, where the mini toll plaza on the far right has been demolished, and replaced with two FasTrak-only lanes.

In addition to the toll plaza work, other bridge-related projects were completed during the detour construction. These maintenance and electrical projects included paving and striping, fixing potholes, repairing call boxes and landscaping.

“This unprecedented construction brings us one step closer to making the new East Span, and the largest bridge in the Toll Bridge Program, a reality,” said CTC Executive Director Bimla Rhinehart. “I would also like to thank everyone who helped us spread the word about the bridge closure and helped make this project a success.”

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