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| **Monday, September 24, 2012 120924-1**  **In this Issue:**  **I-405 Sunset Bridge Opening Today Generates Positive Media Coverage**  **“Carmageddon II” I-405 Freeway Closure** |
| **I-405 Sunset Bridge Opening Today Generates Positive Media Coverage**  This morning, television news channels 2/9, 4/52, 5, 7, 11/13, 34 and KNX, KPCC and KFI radio covered the early morning opening of the I-405 Sunset Bridge. Supervisor and Metro Board Member Zev Yaroslavsky, Metro Executive Director, Transit Project Delivery K.N. Murthy, and Media Relations staff participated in numerous interviews that aired live and will be broadcast throughout the day. The opening was heralded as a positive event for commuters and others because two new traffic lanes have been added and the on and off ramps will have more capacity and the bridge is wider and safer than before. The occasion also was used to remind the public about the I-405 closure this weekend when the northern half of the Mulholland Bridge will be demolished.  **“Carmageddon II” I-405 Freeway Closure**  Numerous media outlets are now reporting on the looming I-405 freeway closure in the Sepulveda Pass scheduled this weekend, September 29-30, 2012. Over the last several weeks, Metro, its partners and public officials have encouraged the public to “Plan Ahead, Avoid the Area, or Eat, Shop and Play Locally” to avoid major congestion impacts this upcoming weekend. The public is encouraged to find alternate means of transportation to enjoy local destinations without driving, but is advised not to become complacent. The risk factors that caused transportation, law enforcement and emergency response agencies concern during last year's I-405 freeway closure have NOT changed. Because of last year’s highly successful demolition and closure operation, more motorists may be tempted to rejoin local roads and freeways this time thinking they will not experience regional congestion. However, the I-405 is still the nation's busiest freeway, with 250,000 vehicles per day on the weekend. Other connecting Los Angeles freeways such as the U.S. 101 and I-10 have their own congestion challenges on weekends. There is limited elasticity in the overall regional freeway system to accommodate diverted I-405 traffic. The closure is still in the geographically constrained Sepulveda Pass, where there are no immediate or effective north/south alternate routes. Additionally, the contractor has more demolition work to perform within the same 53-hour period. And now two sets of bridge columns -- rather than one the previous year -- must be removed. Caltrans will also be doing maintenance work on the freeway at this time. Local and national media outlets, including The Los Angeles Times, KNX, New York Times, NBC News, all local network news stations, among others, are now reporting on the closure, with stories now expected to run on a daily basis. | |
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