

# Officials celebrate grade separation completion

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Cars travel below a railroad crossing in Diamond Bar on Friday, Feb. 20, 2009. The grade separation is part of a larger project that aims to help eliminate train-car crashes by raising or lowering railroad crossings. (SGVN/Staff photo by Watchara Phomicinda)

DIAMOND BAR - Officials gathered Friday morning to laud the recent opening of a new grade separation.

Representatives of Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, U.S. Rep. Gary Miller and U.S. Rep. David Dreier were present at the intersection of Brea Canyon Road and Washington Street, where cars whizzed by underneath a new bridge that carried train traffic.

Before October, cars would build up at the former railroad crossing, waiting for heavily-laden freight trains to pass.

Not anymore.

The finished project, which was dedicated to former Industry Councilman and city engineer Phil Marcellin, is one of about 20 throughout the region that aim to keep vehicles and trains from crossing each other's paths.



Tim Spohn, Industry councilmember and ACE board chair, unveils the dedication plaque with Pat Marcellin, left, whose late husband Philip Marcellin, the Project Engineer and Permit Coordinator for CNC Engineering in the City of Industry, during the Brea Canyon Road grade separation dedication ceremony in Diamond Bar on Friday, Feb. 20, 2009. (SGVN/Staff photo by Watchara Phomicinda)

"It helps keep the region much more mobile and also encourages growth and business," said state Sen. Bob Huff, R-Diamond Bar. "It also keeps the community safe."

Huff added grade separations also help prevent vehicle-train collisions.

Freight train traffic through the area is expected to double over the next ten years or so, officials said, making such separations necessary.

Currently, the two major rail lines running through the Valley carry at least 80 trains daily, officials said.

Officials from Alameda Corridor East, a construction authority created by the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments, said they are hoping money from President Barack Obama's stimulus package will help kick off construction of similar projects in El Monte, San Gabriel and Industry.

"We are certainly working hard on the projects so we would be in a position to compete (for funds)," said Rick Richmond, CEO for ACE. "The allocations for various types of projects are still in discussion."

Industry Mayor Dave Perez said the grade separations will be good for the economy.

"It improves their ability to move more goods," he said. "The trains can be longer and more efficient."

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