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## Mo. Flat work movin' along

By Noel Stack | City editor



*Democrat photo by Pat Dollins THE SOUTHBOUND half of the new Missouri Flat Road Bridge is taking shape. Crews hope to pour the deck of the new bridge in mid-June.*

Ahead of schedule and under budget, not something you hear every day about a road project in El Dorado County.

Looking out at the construction on the second half of the new Missouri Flat Road bridge, supervising civil engineer John Kahling said, The acceleration we did last October really positioned us well.

Since the El Dorado County Department of Transportation and Nehemiah Construction kicked off the project a year ago crews have completed half of the new bridge, knocked down the old one, made multiple intersection improvements, built a retaining wall along Perks Court and, Kahling said, the second half of the bridge is about 75 percent complete. Crews poured the bottom and girders for the new bridge earlier this month and expect to pour the deck during the week of June 16.

Other construction tasks on the to-do list include finishing earthwork at the new half's abutments, paving up to the new half of the bridge, overlaying the entire project with open-graded asphalt and striping.

Then we'll be wide open, Kahling said, adding that drivers can expect to travel on a completed Missouri Flat Road before Labor Day.

They've done a good job and worked well with us, he said of Nehemiah's crew.

The design of this project was really good, Kahling added. It always makes for more efficient construction when you have a good design.

DOT and Quincy Engineering staff worked on the project design.

With few hiccups Ñ some signal light adjustments and a little gridlock when crews shifted traffic ÑKahling said DOT is pleased, if not a little surprised, with the progress. This is the first time the department has worked with Nehemiah.

We haven't had any real significant or unexpected change orders, he explained.

Even drivers seem to accept and support the project, Kahling added, saying he has received few complaints.

Construction crews broke ground on the Missouri Flat Road Interchange Project, phase 1A, in May 2007. Nehemiah won the contract with an \$18.4 million bid. Funding came from a mixture of traffic impact mitigation fees and state funding sources.

After construction on phase 1A wraps up this year, there's little rest for the weary. DOT is on track to have everything in place to begin the Missouri Flat Road Interchange Project, phase 1B, next spring, Kahling said.

Phase 1B will complete the interchange project, fully converting the current configuration into a four-lane tight diamond configuration, eliminating the loop drivers currently use to get off westbound Highway 50.

The construction is a little more involved with 1B but staging, moving traffic around, is less involved, Kahling said.

Construction crews will also widen the Highway 50 bridge over Weber Creek, providing auxiliary lanes for between Forni Road and Missouri Flat Road in both directions. The added lane will eliminate the unsafe merges drivers must now make to get on and off the freeway, Kahling said.

It'll be a big safety improvement, he explained.

The 1B project, expected to take two years to complete, is funded by state and county sources. DOT estimates the cost at about \$38 million.

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