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## Freeway aid program seen easing Highway 50 congestion

The Freeway Service Patrol, a program that aids stranded motorists along heavily traveled stretches of freeway, could help reduce commute-hour congestion on Highway 50 through El Dorado Hills.

The El Dorado County Transportation Commission agreed last week to apply to participate in the program.

Mark Heiman, of the Sacramento Area Council of Governments, said a tow truck would patrol approximately a seven-mile section of Highway 50 from the Sacramento County line to Cameron Park.

Under the program, managed by the California Highway Patrol, a white tow truck would patrol the area during peak traffic hours in the morning and afternoon, looking for stalled vehicles and accidents.

Tow truck drivers will change tires, provide gasoline and tow a vehicle to a safe location.

Heiman said about 35,000 assists are provided annually on the approximately 650 lane miles currently patrolled in the Sacramento area. Motorists on Highways 50 and 99 are the biggest users of the service, he said.

The program is supported by federal, state and local funds.

The local portion for El Dorado County would be provided by the Capitol Valley Services Authority for Freeway Emergencies.

The service would result in no additional cost to the county or Transportation Commission.

– Cathy Locke