

Caltrans aiming for late May reopening of Highway 1 to public

By KELLY NIX

INITIAL WORK to stabilize a portion of Highway 1 south of the Rocky Creek Bridge that crumbled in late March will be completed by Memorial Day, at which point the road will be reopened to the public, Caltrans said this week. Meanwhile, businesses continue to suffer major economic damage due to the road closure, one owner told The Pine Cone.

Caltrans said that by May 27, escorted convoys that have only included Big Sur residents and workers traveling on Highway 1 through the closure would end, and 24/7 alternating one-way traffic through the area using signalized control would begin.

“Once the temporary signals are in place, the road will be open to all travelers,” said Caltrans spokesman Kevin Drabinski.

The convoys operating at 7 a.m. and 5 p.m. are for Big Sur residents and workers only, not tourists or the public.

Scary work

Caltrans said the stabilization work — carried out by daredevil workers dangling over the side of a cliff — is a temporary fix which will allow the unrestricted traffic flow through the area until permanent repairs can be designed and built to restore the southbound lane that was lost in the rockslide, the agency said.

“We know how important Highway 1 is to the regional economy, especially during the summer, so we are working to reopen the roadway as quickly and safely as possible



PHOTO/CALTRANS

Crews in a suspended basket begin drilling Wednesday to reinforce the slope below the Highway 1 slip-out at Rocky Creek.

HOTEL NEAR AQUARIUM GETS COASTAL COMMISSION OK

Construction to start in 18 months

By KELLY NIX

IN A huge win for the owners of the American Tin Cannery and the people who want to build a hotel there, the California Coastal Commission last week approved a



RENDERING/COMSTOCK DEVELOPMENT

As shown in this rendering, a proposed hotel near the Monterey Bay Aquarium retains many of the features of the tin can factory that formerly operated at the site.

Kids take their bumps at Sea Otter Classic



PHOTO/MICHAEL TROUTMAN, DMT IMAGING

While mountain, road and gravel races involving thousands of competitive cyclists swirl around them, these youngsters learn how to maintain control over obstacles at Laguna Seca Thursday during the annual Sea Otter Classic. More images, page 29A.

while at the same time making it more resilient to future extreme weather events,” Caltrans director Tony Tavares said.

Overnight work

Since the so-called “slip-out” of the road, Caltrans has performed geotechnical assessments, widened and improved drainage in the northbound shoulder and placed concrete barriers along the center line. While all that was going on, other workers drilled and installed vertical rock dowels through the pavement of the southbound lane to the edge of the road. The drainage upgrades are expected to help Highway 1 better withstand extreme weather.

Crews this week also drilled anchor supports for deployment of a crane, which will allow them to begin installing horizontal rock dowels, which will be placed

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Decrepit hospital site slated for 143 apartments

By MARY SCHLEY

TAKING ADVANTAGE of developer-friendly state laws and the fact that Monterey County lacks a certified housing plan — opening it to what’s known as “builder’s remedy” — the owner of the long-closed and moldering former Carmel Convalescent Hospital on Valley Way just outside the Carmel city limits has applied to build 143 residences on the nearly 5-acre property.

Less commuting

The project will provide living space for doctors, nurses, firefighters, police officers, teachers and others whose workplaces are in areas where they haven’t been able to afford to live, according to architect Eric Miller.

Paperwork submitted to the county on behalf of West Hollywood real estate developer/investor Jeff Davamandi



PHOTO (TOP) BY MARY SCHLEY, RENDERING BY ERIC MILLER ARCHITECTS

It’s been vacant, falling apart, vandalized and trespassed on for years, but the old Carmel Convalescent Hospital (top) is slated to see new life as the site of 82 apartments, according to a project submitted to the county and illustrated in the above rendering.

indicates 52 flats and townhouses — 11 of them for low-income renters and buyers — will replace 14 “run-down, falling-down apartments,” Miller said. Another 82 apartments will be built in the historic hospital building, which needs a major overhaul after being shut down and subsequently vandalized for many years. At least 20 percent of the homes will be designated affordable, and there will be 91 parking spaces onsite.

Housing Crisis Act

“We made the application under builder’s remedy, SB 330 and the density bonus,” the architect explained. “All of these are available to us from the state.”

SB 330, known as the Housing Crisis Act of 2019, streamlines the approval process for projects containing affordable housing, and density bonuses allow more homes per acre than a property is zoned for when a certain percentage is designated for lower-income occupants.

The provision known as builder’s remedy requires local governments to approve developments that include

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