



NEWS RELEASE

06-420

Date: Tuesday, October 31, 2006

District: 8 – Riverside County

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CALTRANS TO AWARD EMERGENCY CONTRACT FOR RESTORATION OF SR 243

BANNING- California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), advises that SR243 remains closed to ensure motorist safety and to allow preparation for work to begin to repair damaged structures on a 10-mile stretch of SR243. Damage occurred during the recent Esperanza Fire. The road closure is between Wesley Road on the north end and Twin Pines on the south end.

Caltrans has performed damage assessments and expects to award an emergency construction contract today. It is hoped that the contractor will mobilize by Friday, November 3. Work will consist of replacing 8,000 ft. of guardrail, 80 damaged drains, 372 roadside markers, 32 guide and regulatory signs, and a call box.

Due to safety concerns, this closure will remain in place until further notice. Only emergency fire vehicles will have access. Residents living south of Twin Pines must use SR74 from Hemet to access their property and are advised to carry identification. California Highway Patrol is present to enforce the closure.

While work is underway, geological damage assessments will also be performed to identify the extent of damage that has occurred to the stability of the nearby hillside terrain. Rockfall is a serious concern. This will likely require an additional construction contract. The duration of the entire reconstruction project is still undetermined. However, Caltrans is working swiftly to get this road open as soon as it is restored and safe to travel. By Friday, November 3, Caltrans will have a more realistic decision about when the highway can be opened to residents.

Motorists traveling to the mountains are advised to check road conditions before your trip. Please call Caltrans at (866) 383-4631 for information or go to our website at www.caltrans8.info.

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