

A New Opportunity to Communicate the Mission: Building Interpretive Exhibits at Freeway Rest Areas

Overview: Cal Trans is working to upgrade rest areas throughout the California Desert. Some facilities are being replaced, while others will see significant upgrades. They have invited federal, state and county land management agencies to join them in this initiative. The goal of this collaboration is to raise awareness of the desert by designing and fabricating new interpretive and informational exhibits.

Two major projects are underway. Along Interstate 15, just south of the Cima Road, the two Valley Wells Rest Areas will be completely replaced. Planning is currently underway for this \$7,500,000 project with completion expected in 2006. The interpretive component will design and install new exhibits, creating a prototype for use in future Cal Trans construction projects. On Interstate 40, the Fenner Rest Areas will each receive \$750,000 facelifts to carry them over until they too can be replaced in 2012. The team will create temporary exhibits to last for 8-10 years until this rest area is replaced.

Phase 1: Design and Fabricate Exhibits at Fenner Rest Areas

Interpretive displays are being upgraded along with the rest of the facility. Cal Trans and federal land agency employees are designing low cost temporary interpretive panels. All will be created using design standards that are compatible with existing Cal Trans exhibits, so they can be exported to other sites. Funding for this project has been acquired from federal, state and county land managers.

Freeway Use: 5,475,000 vehicles per year, 15,000 per day.

Cost Estimates: \$2,000 - \$3,000

Phase 2: Design Exhibits for Valley Wells Rest Areas

The \$7.5 million Valley Wells project is the first of several new facilities to be built in the California Desert. This part of the project would design the interpretive displays and associated structures. An exhibit design firm would be hired to create a professional product, with planning completed by August, 2004. No funding is currently available for this portion of the project.

Freeway Use: 10,220,000 per year, 28,000 per day

Rough Cost Estimate: \$20,000 - \$25,000

Phase 3: Fabricate Exhibits for Valley Wells Rest Areas

Construction documents prepared during the design phase would be used to construct the final exhibits.

Rough Cost estimate: \$100,000

Cal Trans Contribution: \$50,000

Phase 4: Design and Install Additional Exhibits

Continue collaborative relationship with Cal Trans, developing interpretive exhibits for new rest areas.