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Feb. 28, 2005 - Cars per day highest in El Dorado Hills

By NOEL STACK, Staff writer

At times, El Dorado Hills business owner Dave Williams said he will watch "in amazement" as the traffic goes by or sits idling near his Town Center Hang It Up gallery off of El Dorado Hills Boulevard.

With a planned movie theater under construction near Town Center, Williams said he often wonders what will happen when moviegoers head to see a matinee at the same time Blue Shield employees head home for the day. The likely result - gridlock.

"It's good from a business point of view because you want people in town but it can be frustrating at times," Williams said.

To demonstrate the frustration, Williams explained that if he left his Town Center gallery at about 3:25 p.m. on a weekday and headed to his other gallery off of Green Valley Road, he wouldn't get there until 4 p.m. That's 35 minutes to go about four miles, mostly on El Dorado Hills Boulevard.

A recently released traffic count done by the El Dorado County Department of Transportation lists portions of El Dorado Hills Boulevard as the most traveled roadway sections in the county. The car counts on portions of Cameron Park Drive, Green Valley Road and Missouri Flat Road came in slightly lower than the El Dorado Hills thoroughfare.

The daily car count for the section of El Dorado Hills Boulevard about 200 yards north of Saratoga Way is highest in the county at 36,035, according to the chart.

Understanding that roadways in El Dorado Hills, as well as other areas on the West Slope, have a tremendous amount of traffic traveling on them each day, the Department of Transportation continues to design and construct road improvement projects.

In El Dorado Hills alone, more than 15 projects designed to improve the road system are in various phases. Supervisor Rusty Dupray said the Sophia Parkway opening, which connects Green Valley Road to Empire Ranch Road in Folsom, will help alleviate congestion, offering people another alternative into Folsom rather than taking the freeway. Also, he said, two specific projects under construction will have a strong effect on the amount of traffic on El Dorado Hills Boulevard.

"It will be significantly different this summer when the Silva Valley to White Rock Road and Bass Lake to Serrano (Parkway) connections are open," Dupray said.

Williams said he's looking forward to seeing the completion of those two connector projects. Still, he said, with construction expected to begin on the El Dorado Hills Boulevard interchange improvements, traffic will get worse before it gets better. In a way, Williams explained, he doesn't want the traffic to stop because the more cars, the more business - but there are some obvious concerns about more cars on the roads and more construction. Parking problems and excessive traffic can be a deterrence for potential customers, he added.