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End in sight: Hwy 50 work wraps up this year

EL DORADO HILLS — Just one more summer — that’s all construction crews working on the Highway 50 carpool lanes project in El Dorado Hills need to get the job done.

“Their patience is sincerely appreciated,” said John Kahling, deputy director of the El Dorado County Department of Transportation’s Construction division, of the residents who’ve endured nearly three years of road construction on one of El Dorado Hills’ major arteries. “We’ll be out of here this year.”

Weather was the major culprit behind the project’s extension from two construction seasons to three, Kahling said.

“We’ve had seven months of rain delay,” Kahling explained. “We lost the month of May in both years (2010 and 2011).”

DOT and its contractor, Nehemiah Construction, also had to deal with funding delays due to the state’s ongoing budget crisis and a \$4.5 million change order that extended the carpool lanes project.

The three-mile long project includes extending the carpool lanes past the El Dorado Hills Boulevard/Latrobe Road interchange to just beyond Bass Lake Road, rebuilding that interchange’s bridges, improving the bridges over Silva Valley Parkway and Bass Lake Road and rebuilding Latrobe Road under the new bridge.

This past weekend crews closed the freeway’s eastbound El Dorado Hills Boulevard/Latrobe Road offramp to rebuild it and realign its loop with the new roadway above.

Monday and Tuesday nights crews plan to move traffic over to Highway 50’s outside lanes so they can complete some work in the median. Drivers are asked to watch for signs and carefully drive through the construction zone.

Over the next few months the contractor will wrap up work on Latrobe Road under the bridge. That will mean more total road closures in that area, Kahling said.

On the freeway, Kahling added, “We’ve got a lot of night work to do.”

All the roadway paving will be done at night (watch for traffic shifts) but not until later this summer. Crews need the temperature to stay above 60 degrees to ensure the integrity of the pavement, made of recycled tires, Kahling explained.

Nehemiah also has some wiggle room in its schedule should any surprises arise. Saturday morning crews discovered that a portion of the new offramp’s road bed was too soft; it folded under the weight of a water truck. “We’ve got enough time to take care of this,” Kahling said. “It shouldn’t be a problem.”

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