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## Caldecott Fourth Bore Opens

By Cathy Dausman



Photo Ohlen Alexander

There were representatives from the U.S. Department of Transportation, the state of California, area transportation commissions and local city councils. U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx brought encouragement from President Barak Obama, who said "great things are still worth doing."

Foxx said the Obama administration's "commitment to transportation investments," including the Caldecott tunnel project, "will help connect people to jobs, grow our economy and improve the overall quality of life in communities across the country."

Orinda mayor and Metropolitan Transportation Commission and Bay Area Toll Authority chair Amy Worth had similar thoughts: "The opening of the new tunnel heralds not only a huge increase in the reliability of travel to and from Contra Costa County, but an important boost for the regional economy as both commuters and freight move more efficiently."

"The tunnel is a very big deal and a triumph for Lamorinda," said Moraga mayor Dave Trotter. U.S. Congressman George Miller saluted the incredible work force of trained, skilled construction workers, while Caltrans director Malcolm Dougherty commented on the size of the project. "We haven't had this big a [construction project] year since the completion of the East Bay and Golden Gate bridges [in 1936 and 1937]."

State Assemblymember Nancy Skinner said the 5,000 to 6,000 jobs the tunnel work provided over four years was particularly valuable, noting the first two bores were built in the midst of the Great Depression, while the new Fourth Bore was built during a recession.

The crowd gave a standing ovation in memory of Bhaskar Thapa, a lead engineer for Jacobs Associates who died just months before the project's completion. They delighted in the introduction of Tom Caldecott, grandson of Thomas Caldecott, after whom the tunnel was named. The latter was mayor of Berkeley in the early 1930s and president of Joint Highway District 13.

After the speeches ended, the ribbon was cut, medallions revealed, photos by the hundreds were taken, and guests flowed into the Caldecott Fourth Bore - on foot - to admire its golden hued lighting, high-tech ventilation fans, generous walkways and emergency automobile shoulders.

California Highway Patrol captain BJ Whitten was asked exactly how the lane would open on Saturday. "It's Caltrans' road," Whitten said. "They'll just pick up the barrier." And they did. On time. Under budget. And definitely low-key!

Worth Doing Right  
By Cathy Dausman

Call it ironic or call it poetic justice but Amy Worth ran slightly behind schedule one recent weekday, having found herself the victim of construction-caused delays along Lafayette's Mt. Diablo Boulevard. Transportation issues in Contra Costa County are all in a day's work for the Orinda mayor and chairwoman of the 21-member Metropolitan Transportation Committee which has overseen the Caldecott Fourth Bore Project.

Worth equates transportation mobility with economic prosperity in Contra Costa County, insisting government needs to "make transit work for people," and not the reverse. She cites the Fourth Bore Project, which opened to westbound Highway 24 traffic last weekend, as a great example of inter-agency cooperation - "local voices coming together as a regional government."

The Caldecott Fourth Bore Tunnel is now open for business - Highway 24 westbound motorists are driving under the Berkeley Hills and through a 21st century model of transportation. "Welcome to Bore Four," Caltrans District 4 Director Bijan Sartipi told a standing room only audience of nearly 200 workers and dignitaries last Friday, yards from the mouth of its west portal.

The overhead electric reader board behind the blue ceremonial ribbon echoed Sartipi's greeting exactly, while motorists honked in apparent agreement before disappearing into bore three. Sartipi's remarks concluded with an announcement that fire, life and safety systems tests were complete (see related story on page B1), allowing traffic to begin flowing through the new tunnel early Saturday morning. The project, Sartipi noted, was completed "on time and under budget" - a recurring comment from speakers that day.

The selection of honored guests showed the depth and breadth of project cooperation, both federally and locally. The four year construction project was enormous by many standards.

Worth's personal involvement in transportation issues began nearly 25 years ago when she worked to re-structure Contra Costa County libraries when state and county funding dropped to an all-time low. It was obvious future finances would have to come from local resources, she said. Worth explained that municipalities soon discovered they shared common issues and worked toward mutually beneficial solutions.

In 1998, Worth won her first election to Orinda's city council. There she followed the transportation interests of former council member Sarge Littlehale. She became a member of the Contra Costa Transportation Authority, and later its chairwoman. "Orinda is so close to this [Highway 24] corridor," Worth noted.

As mayor she took a seat on the MTA; this year committee members selected her as chair.

"Amy really brought the Fourth Bore Project to life," said former Orinda mayor and current councilwoman Victoria Smith. "Her leadership on the MTC, the Contra Costa Transportation Authority and in the Measures C and J campaigns drove the project to completion on time and under budget. The Fourth Bore will benefit Contra Costans as they travel to the other side of the tunnel for work, sporting events and entertainment, and will also benefit our communities by allowing residents from the other side of the tunnel to come to Lamorinda and beyond to spend their time and sales tax dollars."

The Fourth Bore will ease commute anxiety and make travel time more predictable, said Worth, even if a Lamorindan's final destination is only Wilder Fields.



Photo Ohlen Alexander



U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx and Amy Worth Photo Ohlen Alexander

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