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Published Thursday, August 16, 2001, in the San Jose Mercury News

Thu Aug 16, 2001 11:48 pm

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Big 101 expansion to begin

Widening of Highway 101 to add four lanes is likely to be last project of its magnitude in the Bay Area for many years. Future funds are earmarked for maintenance and expansion of mass transit.

"8/16 SJ Mercury"
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By Gary Richards
Mercury News

The widening of Highway 101 between Morgan Hill and San Jose begins Friday, and with it comes the end of an era: The highway building boom is over.

The Bay Area most likely will never again see a freeway improvement of this magnitude. Four extra lanes will be added for 10 miles from Cochrane Road to the interchange at Highway 85, a total of 40 miles of new concrete.

1973 to 1982 -- 101 or Monterey Highway nicknamed ``Blood Alley" after 69 fatalities and 745 injuries.

1974 -- Gary Albertson, leader of a group fighting for a new freeway, is killed in a head-on crash on Monterey Highway. Also killed are his wife, 12-year-old daughter and two others.

1984 -- Two months before freeway bypass opens, six people are killed -- a young mother and five children -- as their jeep strikes rear of car waiting to make a left turn on Monterey Highway. The jeep explodes into flames.

1999 -- Eight deaths occur in six months as cars cross through dirt median on 101, prompting state to accelerate installation of a center divider.

Source: Mercury News, Caltrans

HIGHWAY BOOM ENDING

Groundbreaking for the widening of Highway 101 north of Morgan Hill signals an end to a roadway-building boom that has lasted 15 years, adding more than 350 lane-miles of roads in Santa Clara County.

2001 -- Groundbreaking for Highway 101 widening from Cochrane Road to Bernal Road is set for Friday. I-880 at Brokaw Road and Highway 87 near airport under construction. Total miles: 53.

1995 -- Highway 237 converted to freeway. Total miles: 19.

1994 -- Opening of Highway 85 in Almaden Valley.

Total miles: 109.

1993 -- Opening of Highway 87 south of I-280. Total miles: 20.

1992 -- Opening of Highway 101 carpool lanes from South San Jose to San Mateo County. Total miles: 52.