

BRIDGES

New Felton bridge ready mid-January

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FELTON — Despite delays caused by the Oct. 17 earthquake, the \$2.2 million Felton bridge project should be complete by mid-January, according to state road officials.

Work on a two-lane addition to the old bridge connecting Graham Hill Road to Highway 9 began in March, and was originally slated to be complete this month. Two new traffic signals, streetlights, pedestrian walkways and wider access roads have also been installed.

The new span is now finished, and traffic has been diverted onto it to allow work on the old bridge, according to Chris Troxclair, construction foreman for Dan Caputo Co.

"We're ready to tie the two bridges together, but we have to do all the work on the old bridge first," Troxclair said.

Steel rods jutting from the center of the new span match up with steel rods

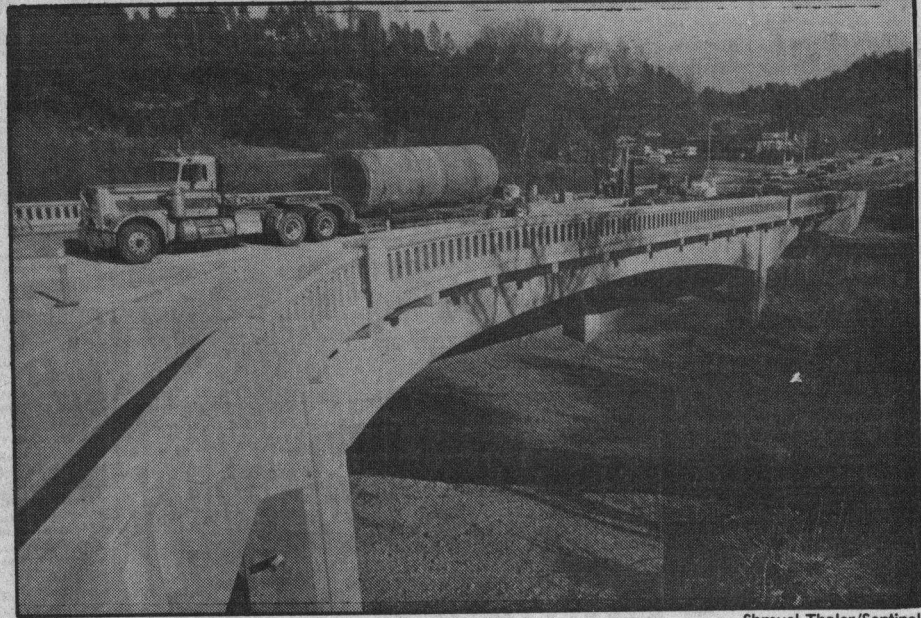
drilled into the old span, Troxclair said. Cement poured between the two will tie the bridges together.

But before the bridges are tied together, workers will install a cement barrier separating traffic lanes from the pedestrian walkway. Crews must replace the bearing pads supporting the old roadbed, and minor cracks discovered on the old bridge must be assessed and repaired, Troxclair said.

The road project was set back somewhat by the Oct. 17 earthquake. Large amounts of fill that had been laid and compacted had to be excavated so workers could examine the new span for signs of damage, Troxclair said. No damage was found.

"This new bridge is completely sound," he said. "I think this bridge would be good for a magnitude-9 earthquake, with all the concrete and steel in it."

A planter strip running down the center of the bridge will be planted with trees and flowers, and new streetlights



Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel

Work on the new span was delayed by the Oct. 17 earthquake.

will match the old-fashioned standards already in place.

The widened bridge and new streetlights are aimed at reducing the daily traffic jams caused by two main access roads that funnel traffic onto the existing two-lane bridge.

"The final opening schedule is sort of

indefinite, but we expect it will be done in mid-January," said Caltrans engineer Frank Kioumehr. "It's a little behind schedule, but considering the earthquake, that's not bad at all. Basically the new bridge is usable now, all that's left are some miscellaneous things to do."