



Bill Lovejoy/Sentinel

Cars stopped at roadblock on Highway 17 near Scotts Valley.

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# Commute not as awful as expected

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Monday's downpour brought a new slide to the summit of Highway 17, but the road was opened at 6 a.m. to buses and carpools of three or more persons.

Escorted groups of vehicles had to weave back and forth on both sides of the highway to avoid slides blocking both the north and south-bound lanes at different points.

Lockheed employee Bud Jones got his vanpool of 14 over the hill to work with little delay, compared to his trip home Friday afternoon.

"It sure beat Highway 9," which took two and a half hours to traverse Friday, Jones said.

"It took 50 minutes today" on Highway 17, Jones said. "We got there in normal time."

After gathering passengers at Scotts Valley and Felton as usual, Jones' van joined a line-up forming

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## Commute/ CHP escorts cars over 17

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south of the Granite Creek exit to wait for a Highway Patrol escort.

The ride over Highway 17 went a steady 35 to 40 mph without a stop, Jones said. His van was 15th in a line of 40 vehicles.

At Lexington reservoir, Jones and his passengers saw a group assembled "ready to head south" to Santa Cruz.

"The (Highway) Patrol seemed to have it very well organized," Jones said. "I saw no car in our group that had less than three people."

Seven CHP cruisers were guiding caravans and manning blockades.

Waiting under the Granite Creek overpass to start a caravan, CHP Officer Dennis Mozeleski said that the traffic was "very light."

"We planned on leading groups of 100 cars at a time," Mozeleski said, "but we've been getting 60 to

70 at the most after a 10-minute wait."

"We haven't had any problems at all except for one accident, when the line of cars stopped and one guy didn't," Mozeleski said. "It was minor, a fender bender."

Some exceptions had been granted Monday to the three-person restriction, said Linda Wilshusen of the Santa Cruz County Transportation Commission, "but it will be strictly enforced" today.

Starting 4:30 this morning, buses will be available to move people between a new park-and-ride lot at Santa's Village in Scotts Valley, and the lot at Branham Avenue and Camden Lane in San Jose.

Buses from Santa Clara Transit will leave Santa's Village every 15 minutes until 6 a.m. They will return from 5 to 6:30 p.m.