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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 20, 2008

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County to Celebrate 10-Year Anniversary of Traffic Operations Center

SAN JOSE, CALIF.— Santa Clara County's William A. Baxter Traffic Operations Center (TOC) will turn 10 years old on May 22. TOC's successful operation benefits 1.5 million expressway users daily. The Santa Clara County Roads and Airports Department invites the public to attend an Open House on June 6 to visit the recently remodeled center.

"Looking back at 10 years of operation, it is clear that the County Traffic Operations Center has filled a vital role," said Supervisor Don Gage, County of Santa Clara Board of Supervisors. "Our ability to coordinate traffic signals and monitor traffic patterns saves expressway users time and money. The TOC allows us to operate the expressways as efficiently as possible given limited lane capacity and limited funding for expansion."

The County's Traffic Operation Center opened for service on May 22, 1998. At that time, traffic operation infrastructure was limited to 32 traffic cameras at eight intersections on three expressways. These closed circuit camera images were viewable only at the TOC. Communication with the signal controllers for remote monitoring of operations was accomplished by leased dial-up phone lines.

Today, nearly 400 traffic cameras at 108 expressway intersections provide live video feeds used by traffic engineering staff to develop traffic signal coordination timing plans and the subsequent adjustments needed to accommodate changes in travel patterns and volumes.

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The number of signal coordination plans has grown from 14 in 1998 to 30 today and will continue to grow as more weekend traffic flow plans are implemented. Traffic Cams are also used by signal operations staff to monitor storm impacts, verify damage, dispatch road and signal repair crews to locations requiring emergency response, and to investigate system-generated alarms. This enables the TOC to perform a dual role as the department-level emergency operations center.

Today, the public can view traffic video from all cameras online at www.countyroads.org, and, beginning today they can also get access to expressway congestion maps through the County's Web site. Funding from the County's 1996 Measure B allowed for the construction of fiber optic communications lines, supplemental traffic detection loops, and system upgrades that improve operational efficiencies and make the congestion mapping possible. The congestion mapping further enables progress on data sharing and broadcasting of traveler information. Access to the Web site congestion mapping can be used by news media, providing for wide broadcast of real time traffic conditions.

To celebrate the center's 10 years of successful operation, the Roads and Airports Department will host an Open House on June 6, 2008, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the East Yard, Building 2, 1505 Schallenberger Road, San Jose. All are welcome to come and visit the recently remodeled William A. Baxter Traffic Operation Center, view the camera video feeds and congestion maps.

Traffic Operations Center's Then and Now

	Then-May 1998	Now-May 2008
Traffic Cameras	32, black and white	399, color
Congestion Maps	none	7 of 8 expressways
Public Access	none	cameras and maps online
Signal Controller Communications	dial-up phone lines	dedicated fiber optic
Miles of fiber optic cable	15	62
Traffic Signal Lamps	incandescent, beginning LEDs for red lights only	all LED, with significant energy cost savings