



## PRESS RELEASE

**Date:** Oct. 14, 2015  
**Contact:** John Standiford, Deputy Executive Director  
(951) 453-8249 – Mobile  
Eliza Echevarria, Public Affairs Manager  
(951) 235-9564 - Mobile

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

### **RCTC Provides Update on 91 Bridge Accident Three Investigations Underway**

Three separate investigations are underway to determine the cause of an Oct. 9 construction accident involving the 91 Project in Corona. An update about the incident was provided at today's Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) meeting in Riverside.

The California Occupational Health and Safety Administration (CAL-OSHA), the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and an independent forensic engineer are working to determine the cause of the accident.

Atkinson/Walsh Joint Venture, the project's design-build contractor, has retained the services of Washington DC-based KCE Structural Engineers. KCE is internationally known for investigations of natural and man-made disasters, forensic engineering and emergency repair work. The firm was one of the companies involved in the evaluation and repair of the Pentagon after the 9/11 terrorist acts. The firm is already on site and will conduct an independent investigation to determine the cause of the accident and recommend repairs for the long-term durability of the bridge. The Caltrans investigation also will consider the cause of the accident and whether any changes will need to be made to statewide construction processes.

While much attention is being placed on the accident itself and its causes, the condition of the injured workers remains a paramount concern for all involved and was emphasized by RCTC Executive Director Anne Mayer at the Commission meeting.

"Our first and foremost priority has been, and continues to be, the safety of the workers and the traveling public," Mayer said.

**-MORE-**

“RCTC, Atkinson/Walsh and the California Transportation Foundation (CTF) are working with interested families of the injured workers to establish a Workers’ Assistance Account. These worker accounts provide the opportunity for public donations to be made to the workers and their families. In addition, CTF will match the donations dollar for dollar up to \$5,000 per worker.”

Mayer also stated that medical care and disability benefits would be covered by Workers’ Compensation Insurance, since it was a workplace accident.

Seven workers involved in the incident remain hospitalized. Out of respect for the injured workers and their families’ privacy, RCTC will not release details related to their injuries or their medical conditions.

“The 91 Project Team’s thoughts and prayers remain with those injured by this accident. The kind words and offers of support from the community are sincerely appreciated,” said Mayer.

The construction incident occurred late Friday night, Oct. 9, during a construction procedure known as bridge-jacking. The construction operation involves lowering the deck of a bridge onto permanent concrete supports using hydraulic jacks. Crews construct the bridge deck above the supports, and then lower the deck. This practice allows motorists to travel beneath the bridge during its construction. The bridge deck in question weighs 750 tons and spans E. Grand Boulevard in Corona.

The 91 Project requires seven bridges to be built in this manner. A similar operation was successfully completed on one bridge, and plans call for five others to be built using this construction method. This method will be halted until the cause of the accident is better understood. Construction work that does not involve the bridge-jacking process has resumed. At this time, it is too early to tell if the accident will affect the project’s anticipated opening of new lanes in 2017.

“These investigations will take time, and they need to be done right,” said Mayer. “The project team is cooperating with each investigation and RCTC will be monitoring progress and findings.”

###