



A \$15.8 million project to widen a three-mile portion of State Route 26 from Wimer Road to Savage Way has begun.

Work begins on dangerous stretch of State Route 26

By Nick Baptista

A much-anticipated State Route 26 construction project that will improve vehicular safety at the intersection with Burson Road is under way.

The \$15.8 million project calls for widening, realigning and repaving a 3.1-mile stretch of the highway from Savage Way to Wimer Road. RGW Construction Inc. of Livermore was awarded a \$6.2 million contract from Caltrans back in June for the construction phase of the project.

Of particular importance to Calaveras County officials is work to improve safety at the intersection of State Route 26 and Burson Road. County Public Works Director Tom Garcia submitted a letter to Caltrans in July asking the agency to take a close look at the intersection.

The site has been the scene of two fatalities this year - June 27 when Alan David Rudd, 46, of Lockeford and March 16 when Linda Louise Krigbaum, 48, of Burson lost their lives negotiating the curve.

Plans call for an 11-foot left turn lane on eastbound portion of State Route 26 at the intersection and 8-foot shoulders, said Zelig Nogueira from Caltrans.

District 1 Supervisor Gary Tofanelli said he is pleased with Caltrans' efforts to improve safety at the intersection, which is within his district. Krigbaum was a neighbor of his, but he first became concerned about the intersection in August of last year when a big-rig went out of control at the curve and lost its load of riprap. The accident tied up morning commuter traffic for nearly an hour.

Kerry Morgan is the Caltrans project engineer and work is scheduled to be completed by the fall of next year.

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