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66th KZGN News Talking Points Editorial

Do you support the 25mph speed limit on China Lake Blvd. in the construction zones?

First, a recap of last Tuesday’s editorial titled: Should the city officially support tax increases the state wants to add to our gas and licenses fees?

The recap of this issue was that the California League of Cities was encouraging all local cities to pass resolutions to be forwarded to the state legislatures. The resolution included wording as follows: We support a moderate increase in gas and diesel taxes, and vehicle registration and license fees. In my editorial, I took the position completely against this resolution with that wording in it. Well, it turns out public comment expressed at the meeting agreed with me. Everyone encouraged the council to not approve the resolution.

Chip Holloway offered comment that the resolution was meant to put pressure on the state to use transportation funding for transportation costs, which everyone agrees with. The resolution also included support for tax and fee increases. Ultimately, the council did they right thing. They did not approve the resolution at all. There is no need for us to encourage the liberals in Sacramento to raise our taxes. They’ll probably do it anyway, but we don’t need to encourage them.

On to today’s editorial topic: Do you support the 25mph speed limit on China Lake Blvd. in the construction zones?

The reduced speed limit is for two main purposes. First, it helps protect the workers that are out in the road doing the work. The second reason for the reduced speed limit to be in effect, even when the workers are not present, is due to the actual construction. Often times, the construction area is left in what could be described in a dangerous condition. When the contractor erects the lane cones and warning signs, they are set out based on the speed of traffic. Erecting signs for 25 mph is a lot shorter advance area, compared to signage for vehicle’s traveling at the normal speed limit. A person driving at a slower speed has more time to react to changes in the road conditions. As lane changes start and stop, even with the signage they have out there, people still don’t see lane closures ahead and drive right up to the lane merge cones and have to stop. Or, worse yet, they plow through the cones. With the slower speed, people have more time to look ahead and plan their course. As a police volunteer, there are times when I’ve been out in the roadway helping control traffic at accident scenes. We’ve had police cars out blocking traffic lanes. We set out lane control cones when time allows. Yet, even with police car flashing lights, we have people that drive up to us and seem to never see us until it’s too late and they start making lane changes and swerve to avoid hitting us. I had a driver come within 5 feet of running directly into me once. He never saw me until it was almost too late. In another instance, we had a total closure of all east bound traffic lanes on a road. A guy drove up to the closure at full speed. At the last minute, when he was close enough i could look into his eyes, he saw the closure and swerved over into the oncoming traffic lanes to avoid colliding with us. And I could go on and on with these occurrences.

There are just too many drivers that only see 50 feet in front of them while driving. They don’t look out way ahead and determine traffic conditions in advance. By reducing the speed limit in the construction zone, it helps give these people more time to react to the changes and dangers of a construction zone ahead of them. Opponents of the reduced speed zone say that when workers are not present, the speed limit should be the regular speed limit. To them I say, the obstacle of construction traffic control doesn’t go away when the workers leave. Join the police department as a volunteer and see how people drive. Witness how they don’t see changes in traffic. When they are forced to slow down, it provides a much safer roadway for everyone. And my gosh, it’s a reduced speed for about 2 miles. That is the difference of maybe 2 minutes travel time for the distance. Hopefully the contractor will get done with this soon. Completion is scheduled for October though.

In conclusion, while the 25mph speed limit is a pain, it’s to help avoid hurting construction workers, and helping prevent accidents with the general driving public. The potential of accidents exist even when workers are not present.

I’m Tom Wiknich, and that’s what I think. I’d like to know what you think. If you have any comments about this editorial, or would like to discuss or recommend a topic, I’d like to hear from you. Please email them toinfo@kzgn.net.