

Key leg of Tracy Triangle opened 50 years ago

Tracy reputation as a major transportation hub was first assured in 1878 when the Central Pacific Railroad completed the junction of two rail lines, creating the town of Tracy in the process.

Those were the days when railroads carried nearly all of the freight for California's growing business and industrial enterprises. Cars and trucks struggled to make their way along rutted, often dusty and sometimes muddy roads.

It was 50 years ago, though, that our town's place in the new age of freeways and truck transportation was assured. It was the opening on Dec. 21, 1970, of what originally was called the North Tracy Bypass — and soon became known as Interstate 205.

I-205 was the second leg of the Tracy freeway triangle to be completed. Although the first

leg, Interstate 580 opened three years earlier along the foothills, established an important connection between the Bay Area and Southern California, I-205 created the immediate impact of an essential link between the Bay Area and northern end of the San Joaquin Valley. It was a link that more recently has been taking on a new identity as “the mega-region of Northern California.”

Meanwhile, back in the December 1970 ribbon-cutting opening Interstate 205, Assembly Speaker (and former Tracy mayor) Bob Monagan gave the main talk, taking note of the importance of the freeway triangle being pieced together around Tracy.

“With this freeway triangle, Tracy will



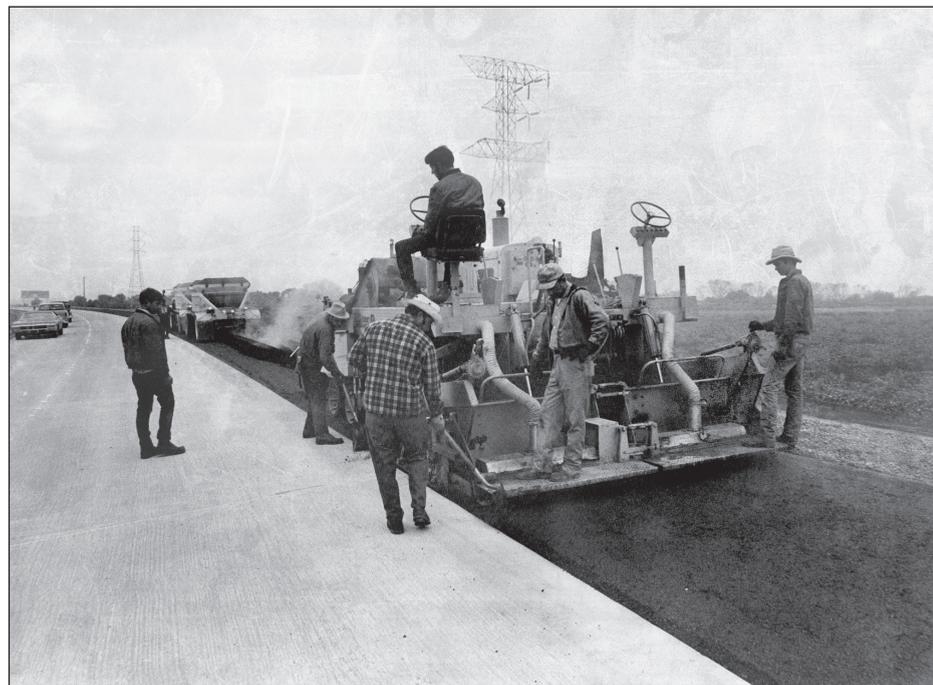
be the focal point of the entire economy of Northern California,” he declared.

And especially, it was I-205 that immediately established the critical freeway infrastructure for Tracy's warehousing and distribution industry, first with the Northeast Industrial Area to the east and more recently with the Prologis International Park of Commerce to the west — both bordering I-205.

Meanwhile, Interstate 580, the first leg of the freeway triangle opened in 1967 along the foothills, has become an increasingly important entry and exit point for trucks traveling to and from Safeway, Costco and FedEx and other major warehouse and distribution operations.

The third leg of the Tracy Triangle — a segment of Interstate 5 running north and south on the east side of town — was opened a year after I-205, assuring easy access to markets north to British Columbia south to the Mexican border.

But back to the opening of Interstate 205 in December 1970. It may be of at least some interest to motorists trav-



Press file photo

SMOOTH ROAD: A paving crew of the Gordon H. Ball Construction Co. lays the final layer of paving of Interstate 205 before it was opened a half-century ago in December 1970. The freeway on the north side of Tracy was described as “one of the smoothest highway jobs in the state.”

eling daily on I-205 to learn that Neal Anderson, district engineer for the State Division of Highways (now Cal Trans), also spoke at the opening ceremony, making a point of praising the freeway's quality of construction. He credited the project's general contractor, the Gordon H. Ball Co. of Danville, as “turning out one of the smoothest highway jobs in the state.”

The highway engineer explained that state standards allow for as much as seven inches of variations of smoothness for every mile of freeway, but the North Tracy Bypass had only one inch of variation per mile. Does anyone know if that

smooth ride persists today?

And I should add another note: The December 21, 1970, ribbon-cutting ceremony has a continuing connection to the Interstate 205 of today. As noted, Bob Monagan, the Assembly speaker and former Tracy mayor, gave the main address. Several years after it was opened, Interstate 205 gained another name, one still posted on signs along side the freeway — Robert T. Monagan Freeway.

■ Sam Matthews, Tracy Press publisher emeritus, can be reached at 830-4234 or by email at shm@tracypress.com.

accolades.

Mountain House students place in inaugural online oratory contest

Press staff report

Three students from Mountain House were honored for the oratory skills placing in the first online Original Oratory and Motivational Speech competition sponsored by the Rrooar Coding and Robotics Academy in late December.

Sachnoor Kaur, a freshman at Mountain House High School, was the first place winner in the contest's Group 3 with Alam Singh, an eighth-grader at Hansen Elementary School, taking third place in the group.

Maheep Singh a fifth-grader



KAUR



A. SINGH



M. SINGH

from Bethany Elementary School, placed second among Group 2 competitors.

They competed among 22 students, and winners were announced in four groups for students in classes from first to 12th grade. Students from Forest Park Elementary School of Fremont

, Mission Hills School of Union City and Thornton Junior High of Fremont were represented among the top contestants.

The Rrooar Coding and Robotics Academy was founded by Gagan A. Kaur of Mountain House, and specializes in after-school enrichment programs that include classes in coding, robotics, creative writing, web design and public speaking.

The speech contest was held online on Dec. 20 and featured guest speaker appearances by Gurbir Grewal, Attorney General of New Jersey, and J.J. Kapur who won the 2017 National Original Oratory award.

Judges for the contest were public speaking enthusiasts Millicent R. Dizon, Honey Patel and Manjit Gill. Happiness coach Lisa Lopez was the emcee, and Ravnor Shahota was the event manager.

Rrooar Academy plans to open the Original Oration and Motivational Speech program to schools as a competitive segment.

For more information contact rrooar.com.

■ Contact the Tracy Press at tpnews@tracypress.com or 835-3030.

TWICE TOLD TALES

10 years ago — 2011

Budget issues are keeping the California Highway Patrol and the Tracy Police Department from conducting checkpoints to check on drivers who may be driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Aditya Gupta, a freshman at Tracy High School, will represent the Tracy Unified School District at the State Spelling Bee in May. He finished second in his division of the San Joaquin County Spelling Bee.

Brighter Christmas handed out 834 boxes of food and 756 boxes of toys to Tracy families in need in the days before Christmas.

Votes are still being accepted for a contest that could give a health clinic in Tracy \$50,000 to help treat those without health insurance.

25 years ago — 1996

Two local home brewers, Chuck Hotchkiss and Cliff Edson, have decided to open their own commercial micro-brewery in a local business park.

Jimmy Dameron has made his “last run” as a Southern Pacific engineer, ending a 44-year career with the railroad.

Twenty-two Tracyites have completed the 12-week Police Academy held by the Tracy Police Department.

Pat Rogers, a Tracy native who has become West Coast manufacturing manager of the H.J. Heinz Co., has marked 40 years with Heinz.

Mary Pribyl, senior member of the Tracy Planning Commission, is stepping down at the end of the year.