PHOTO OPPORTUNITY
GRAND OPENING OF
GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE PUBLIC SAFETY RAILING
“Ride Safe on the Golden Gate”

On Thursday, December 11, 2003, at 11:30 am, the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District (District), the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition (SFBC), and the Marin County Bicycle Coalition (MCBC) will join together to roll-out a new public safety awareness campaign: Ride Safe on the Golden Gate in honor of the recently completed Golden Gate Bridge Public Safety Railing. The media is invited to join officials and staff from the three organizations at the Golden Gate Bridge flag pole area located near the Gift Center on the southeast side of the span (alternate rain location will be in the Board Room, Administration Building).

Unique to the Golden Gate Bridge are its publicly accessible sidewalks. With the number of sidewalk users steadily on the rise, a new four foot, six inches high Public Safety Railing was installed between the six-lane roadway and each of the two sidewalks to improve safety for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists alike. Prior to the installation of the new Public Safety Railing, the original design provided an eighteen-inch high steel barrier separating the roadway and the sidewalks.

The District’s General Manager Celia Kupersmith stated, “The completion of the Public Safety Railing is a true testament to the collaboration between the District and the communities that we serve and a crucial milestone for improved safety on the Golden Gate Bridge.”

To underscore the importance of safety on the Golden Gate Bridge sidewalks, the District has joined with the SFBC and MCBC to initiate a new public awareness campaign dubbed Ride Safe on the Golden Gate. Both coalitions will conduct outreach in support of the message that the Golden Gate Bridge is for everyone – and cyclists are urged to take a leading role in making the pathways safe and friendly places to ride and walk!

According to District Board member and San Francisco Bicycle Coalition Executive Director Leah Shahum, “This is a unique opportunity to bring together the local bicycle coalitions and a major Bay Area bicycle access link to add focus to the significant role that cyclists must take in setting the pace for safety, particularly on the visitor-rich Golden Gate Bridge. The new Public Safety Railing immediately improved safety on the span, yet bicyclists still need to take responsibility for riding safely and remaining alert to avoid collisions. Many of us bicyclists in the Bay Area treasure riding over the Golden Gate Bridge for both recreation and transportation, so we need to make sure we take the lead in safety.”
Additional Background

The east sidewalk serves as the promenade for tourists and bicyclists during daylight hours and at night bicyclists are provided access via a secured gated system. The west sidewalk serves as a key staging area during the week for workers and their equipment and as the main artery for many weekend cycling enthusiasts. Pedestrian use ranges from as many as 3,800 on weekdays and as many as 6,500 on weekends and bicycle use ranges from as high as 1,600 on weekdays to as high as 5,000 on weekends.

Preliminary design and engineering began in 1996. A comprehensive design review and public outreach process was undertaken to ensure that the new railing would not adversely impact the historic architecture of the Bridge, obscure the spectacular views, impact wind stability, or compromise the safety of motorists, bicyclists, or pedestrians. The railing was designed in accordance with standards and specifications developed by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and California Department of Transportation (Caltrans).

On August 10, 2001, District’s Board of Directors awarded the construction contract to Christie Constructors, Inc., Richmond, California to fabricate and install a public safety railing on the east and west sidewalks. Railing components were fabricated off-site in 2002. Installation began in January 2003 and was completed in November 2003.

The construction cost totaled $4.5 million, with $724,000 coming from federal grant funds. A total of 18,300 feet of railing was installed. The majority of work required on the heavily utilized east sidewalk occurred at night to minimize impacts to the traveling public as well as to address safety concerns.

MORE FOR INFORMATION

About the Public Safety Railing:
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About Bicycle Safety:
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