**Briefing**

**Date**: July 22, 2005
**For:** Desert Managers Group
**Title**: DMG CalTrans Partnership - Creating Rest Area Exhibits

**Overview**: Cal Trans is working to upgrade rest areas throughout the California Desert. Some facilities are being replaced, while others will see significant upgrades. They have invited federal, state and county land management agencies to join them in this initiative. A workgroup under the DMG has been established to work with CalTrans. The goal of this collaboration is to raise awareness of the desert by designing and fabricating new interpretive and informational exhibits at desert rest areas.

**Projects**

1. **Interpretive Posters for Interstate 40 and Interstate 15 Rest Areas – PROJECT COMPLETE**

Current CalTrans facilities have enclosed bulletin boards. The DMG worked with CalTrans to design and install low cost interpretive posters for four rest areas along Interstate 15 and Interstate 40. We have been contacted to extend this work to additional rest areas.

Freeway Use: Interstate 40 - 5,475,000 vehicles per year, 15,000 per day
Interstate 15 - 10,220,000 per year, 28,000 per day
Budget: $2,000 (funding from DMG partners)

2. **Valley Wells Rest Area**

Along Interstate 15, just south of the Cima Road, both north and south bound units at the Valley Wells Rest Area will be completely replaced. Planning is currently underway for this $7,500,000 project with completion expected in 2007. The interpretive component will design and install new exhibits, creating a prototype for use in future CalTrans construction projects.

**Phase 1: Conceptual Exhibit Plans – PROJECT COMPLETE**

CalTrans initial budget for exhibits was $100,000, a modest figure for a project of this scope. DMG partners agreed to fund and carry out the work needed to design exhibits, leaving the entire $100,000 for fabrication. We developed interpretive themes, raised $21,000 to fund design, and then selected an exhibit designer for the project (Leslie Stone Associates). The group also worked with CalTrans to put in for a $933,000 transportation grant to significantly expand the exhibit project. When this grant was funded all participants reevaluated the project. We agreed to use the $21,000 and the skills of Leslie Stone to do conceptual design plans, preparing the way for the final project. The conceptual plans were completed early in 2005. They have generated interest throughout CalTrans and are being talked about as a model for future rest areas.
Freeway Use: 10,220,000 per year, 28,000 per day
Budget: $21,000 (funding from DMG partners)

**Phase 2: Formal Design Plans for Valley Wells**
The formal design phase of the project is now underway. Working under the main contractor for the rest area rebuild, Leslie Stone Associates has been selected as the exhibit design firm to work with the partners to create final construction documents. The kick-off meeting will take place in July, 2005.
Budget: Unknown (CalTrans funding)

**Phase 3: Fabricate and Install Exhibits**
Continue collaborative relationship with Cal Trans, fabricate and install exhibits, and completing all other site work needed for exhibits.
Budget: $933,000 (Transportation Grant – Federal Highway Funds)

**Phase 4: Maintenance**
The DMG and CalTrans will develop long-term strategies to ensure the exhibits are maintained.

3. **Boron Rest Area**

The rest area at Boron will be completely torn down and replaced, similar to what is happening at Valley Wells. The initial meeting occurred in June, 2005 with the DMG group represented by Brad Mastin of Barstow BLM. The goal is to replicate the successful collaboration started at Valley Wells. CalTrans has already selected an aerospace theme for the facility, and would like to work with the DMG to develop design ideas for exhibits.
Budget: Not Established

4. **Additional Rest Area Architectural and Interpretive Themes**

The DMG has been asked to provide input into future rest area renovations. Specifically, we have been asked to provide ideas for architectural and interpretive themes for five rest areas in the desert including:

Interstate 10 – Wiley's Well (west of Blyth)
Interstate 10 – Cactus City (east of Indio)
Interstate 40 – John Wilkie (just west of Fenner)
Interstate 40 – Desert Oasis (east of Barstow)
Interstate 15 – CV Kane (east of Barstow)