

= California State Route 46 =

State Route 46 (SR 46) is an east - west state highway in the U.S. state of California . It is a major crossing of the Coast Ranges , connecting SR 1 on the Central Coast near Cambria and US 101 in Paso Robles with SR 99 at Famoso in the San Joaquin Valley . East of Paso Robles , where it carried U.S. Route 466 until 1964 , SR 46 is part of the California Freeway and Expressway System , though it is mostly a two - lane highway . The highway from SR 1 to SR 41 near Cholame is an eligible State Scenic Highway , but has not been designated as such .

The road that is now SR 46 was built and improved during the 1920s and was fully paved by 1930 . The majority of SR 46 was originally designated as U.S. Route 466 ; however , after the latter was entirely removed from the U.S. Highway system , the eastern portion of the route became SR 46 .

= = Route description = =

State Route 46 begins at SR 1 southeast of Cambria , about one mile (2 km) from the Pacific Ocean . It heads east as the Eric Seastrand Highway across the Santa Lucia Range on a relatively straight roadway built in the 1970s , bypassing the steep , curvy Santa Rosa Creek Road . After passing near several wineries , this first segment ends at US 101 north of Templeton , where SR 46 turns north , overlapping the US 101 freeway through the valley formed by the Salinas River to central Paso Robles . Immediately after splitting from US 101 , SR 46 crosses the Salinas River , passing near the Paso Robles Municipal Airport , and then heads east through a hilly area with several wineries and the community of Whitley Gardens . It then runs partially alongside the Estrella River to a merge with SR 41 near Shandon and a rest area . There , it turns northeast , following Cholame Creek through Cholame Pass between the Cholame Hills and Temblor Range to the settlement of Cholame and the split with SR 41 . After crossing into Kern County , the highway continues to rise as it heads east up the Antelope Grade to a summit near Bluestone Ridge before descending through Polonio Pass into the Antelope Valley , an arm of the San Joaquin Valley .

Once it enters the San Joaquin Valley , SR 46 , known as the Paso Robles Highway , follows an almost perfectly straight eastward alignment , crossing SR 33 at Blackwells Corner , passing through the Lost Hills Oil Field , and intersecting I - 5 about two miles (3 km) past Lost Hills and the crossing of the California Aqueduct . SR 46 then passes through the Semitropic Oil Field about seven miles west of Wasco . SR 46 and SR 43 overlap for a short distance in the city of Wasco , and then SR 46 passes over Calloway Canal and Friant Canal before it ends at SR 99 in Famoso . The county - maintained Famoso Road continues east across SR 65 and into the Sierra Nevada foothills .

= = History = =

As part of the second state highway bond issue , approved by the state 's voters in 1916 , Route 33 was created , linking the San Joaquin Valley trunk (Route 4 , now SR 99) near Bakersfield with the coast trunk (Route 2 , now US 101 in Paso Robles , passing through the Coast Ranges via Cholame Pass . The road was not yet built in 1919 , when the Automobile Blue Book recommended only the county - maintained " very poor road " (now SR 58) via Simmler as a connection between the valley and Central Coast . By 1925 , the Cholame Pass highway had been improved , and paving was completed in December 1930 . An extension west to Route 56 (now SR 1) near Cambria was added in 1933 ; however , it ran along Santa Rosa Creek Road , north of today 's alignment .

The state sign route system was established in 1934 , but the majority of Route 33 did not receive a state route designation , instead becoming part of the new U.S. Route 466 . However , US 466 turned southwest from Cholame Pass along Legislative Route 125 (modern SR 41) to Morro Bay . Sign Route 41 , which followed Legislative Route 125 northeast of Cholame , continued along Route 33 west to the coast . However , Route 125 had still not been paved between Cholame and Atascadero by the 1950s , and so US 466 was moved to the longer but better - quality Route 33

via Paso Robles , replacing SR 41 to Paso Robles and overlapping US 101 to Atascadero . As SR 41 had not been signed over the unpaved road west of Paso Robles , it was truncated to Cholame . US 466 was eliminated in the 1964 renumbering , becoming SR 46 east from Paso Robles . However , instead of going south and west to Morro Bay , SR 46 continued west to Cambria , and the road via Creston and Atascadero to Morro Bay (which had since been paved) became part of SR 41 . A new two @-@ lane expressway carrying SR 46 west from Paso Robles was built in the mid @-@ 1970s , replacing Santa Rosa Creek Road .

The two @-@ lane stretch from Paso Robles to Cholame was once known as " Blood Alley " for the large number of car crashes , mainly head @-@ on collisions , among the high volume of commuters , truckers , and tourists . Between 2000 and 2010 , a total of 38 people have died . As of 2016 , Blood Alley was widened to a four lane expressway from the junction of US 101 to just east of the west junction of SR 41 , near the town of Shandon . The east junction of the SR 46 - SR 41 split , is named after actor James Dean , who was killed in a car accident near this site on September 30 , 1955 . The current intersection is now marked as the James Dean Memorial Junction . The junction was officially dedicated as the James Dean Memorial Junction on September 30 , 2005 , as part of the State of California 's official commemoration of the 50th anniversary of Dean 's death . However , this is not the actual intersection where the accident occurred , contrary to popular belief . The accident scene is approximately 100 feet to the south of the current intersection , where the road use to be . The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) carried out an interim safety project in December 1995 , mandating daytime headlights and installing thermoplastic striping and rumble strips . Caltrans has plans to start widening the section between SR 33 and I @-@ 5 in 2017 . There are also plans to upgrade SR 46 west of this segment and build an interchange at the James Dean Memorial Junction (SR 41 North) .

= = Major intersections = =

Except where prefixed with a letter , postmiles were measured on the road as it was in 1964 , based on the alignment that existed at the time , and do not necessarily reflect current mileage . R reflects a realignment in the route since then , M indicates a second realignment , L refers an overlap due to a correction or change , and T indicates postmiles classified as temporary (for a full list of prefixes , see the list of postmile definitions) . Segments that remain unconstructed or have been relinquished to local control may be omitted . The numbers reset at county lines ; the start and end postmiles in each county are given in the county column .