

= California State Route 149 =

State Route 149 (SR 149) is a short state highway that helps to connect Oroville and Chico through rural Butte County . Connecting State Route 70 at Wicks Corner with State Route 99 east of Durham , it forms part of the primary north ? south highway through the eastern Sacramento Valley , a Focus Route of the Interregional Road System . SR 149 was formerly part of the Oroville @-@ Chico Highway ; the majority of the latter was merged into other routes . In the mid @-@ 1970s , the highway was reallocated onto a newer two @-@ lane alignment . The route is also part of the California Freeway and Expressway System , and a project to widen the two @-@ lane road to a four @-@ lane expressway was completed in late 2008 , removing the bottleneck from the Oroville @-@ Chico highway .

= = Route description = =

State Route 149 begins at Wicks Corner as a divided highway , at an interchange with SR 70 several miles north of Oroville . This is the north end of the State Route 70 freeway , which passes through a gap between the Campbell Hills and South Table Mountain on its way from Oroville . SR 149 heads northwest across gently rolling terrain before descending into the valley of the Dry Creek . As it begins to climb out of the valley , SR 149 ends at an interchange with SR 99 . The latter highway continues the corridor northwest to Chico , quickly dropping back into the Butte Creek valley . The route is a divided highway with four lanes .

= = History = =

By the late 1910s , a " natural prairie road " linked Oroville to State Highway Route 3 southeast of Chico , following the present Table Mountain Boulevard , Openshaw Road , and Oroville @-@ Chico Highway to Midway (Route 3) . The primary route between these two cities was the all @-@ state highway route , following Route 21 (now SR 162) west from Oroville to Route 3 near Richvale . Butte County dedicated a newly improved Oroville @-@ Chico Highway on July 4 , 1926 ; it became part of the state highway system in 1933 as the northern portion of the Woodland @-@ Chico Route 87 . (The rest of Route 87 became part of Sign Route 24 , which turned east at Oroville along present State Route 70 , in 1934 .)

In the 1950s and 1960s , about three @-@ quarters of the Oroville @-@ Chico Highway was absorbed by other routes . A new two @-@ lane alignment of U.S. Route 99E (Legislative Route 3 , now SR 99) between east of Richvale and Chico opened in the mid @-@ 1950s , using part of the Oroville @-@ Chico Highway south of Durham Dayton Highway and bypassing the remainder to the junction south of Chico . In the early 1960s , U.S. Route 40 Alternate (Legislative Route 21 , now SR 70) was relocated due to the damming of Lake Oroville across its old alignment . The bridge over the West Branch Feather River northwest of the dam opened in August 1962 , resulting in US 40 Alt. using the Oroville @-@ Chico Highway (which was relocated to a new four @-@ lane freeway alignment) south of Wicks Corner . The remainder , which was never part of a sign route , became Route 149 in the 1964 renumbering .

SR 149 was relocated onto a new two @-@ lane alignment in the mid @-@ 1970s , leaving behind Openshaw Road . Caltrans began studies for interchanges at each end in September 1992 . The California Transportation Commission approved funding for four @-@ laning SR 149 in April 1994 and the two interchanges in May 1996 , with construction to begin in 1998 and cost \$ 47 million . Due to state budget problems and the need to study environmental impacts , the project was repeatedly pushed back ; these impacts and inflation had more than doubled the cost to \$ 120 million in 2004 . In particular , an endangered species of meadowfoam was discovered on the south embankment , forcing a redesign . Construction began in September 2005 on a new freshwater marsh near the State Route 70 intersection to replace beaver ponds in the path of the highway , and it was completed in March 2006 .

Ground was broken for the highway project in April 2006 , with major construction beginning in May

. Caltrans estimated completion in late 2009 for the completion of the four @-@ lane expressway , including a new directional interchange at each end , at which State Route 70 and State Route 99 will exit and enter to the right of the main Oroville @-@ Chico movement . Most access was closed , with Shippee Road providing the sole at @-@ grade crossing of the expressway , and an overcrossing near State Route 70 giving access to local property . Shippee Road was relocated to the southeast , allowing for the future construction of an interchange . In addition , State Route 70 was relocated to the west between SR 149 and State Route 191 , and local access on State Route 99 between SR 149 and the Durham Dayton Highway interchange was replaced by frontage roads . The entire project was completed in November 2008 , at a cost of \$ 125 million .

= = 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 entire route is in Butte County .