

July 25, 2005

New south Innisfail interchange improves safety for drivers

Innisfail... Getting in and out of Innisfail and the Bowden Institute area via the Queen Elizabeth II Highway is now safer and easier.

Dr. Lyle Oberg, Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation, and Luke Ouellette, Minister of Restructuring and Government Efficiency and MLA for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake, officially opened the new \$26-million south Innisfail interchange on July 25 along with officials from the towns of Innisfail and Bowden, Red Deer County, and the Bowden Institute.

"This new interchange represents government's commitment to improving our highway network to benefit travellers and support Alberta's strong economy," said Oberg.

Construction began in the fall of 2003 and was completed this month. The new interchange serves highway travellers along with the communities of Innisfail, Bowden, and Red Deer County. In addition to interchange construction, the project also included improving connecting roads, widening the median, and removing approximately 20 less-safe access points and 10 median crossovers.

"The interchange and associated highway improvements are welcomed by our community," said Ouellette. "The highway is now safer and more efficient for all who use it."

On average, interchanges reduce collisions by 45 per cent and are considered the safest way to exit or access a freeway or highway. Approximately 26,000 vehicles per day use this section of the Queen Elizabeth II Highway.

The Alberta government invested \$26 million in the south interchange and related improvements. An estimated \$18 million will be invested in modifications to the nearby north Innisfail interchange, the west side frontage service road, median widening between the south and north interchanges, and Highway 54 realignment. This work is expected to be completed in 2006.

The Alberta government will invest \$669 million for the construction and preservation of the province's highway network in 2005-06. Visit www.travelinfotest.ab.ca for real-time information regarding Queen Elizabeth II Highway conditions.

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