

Increased speed limit on Arrow Highway likely

The speed limit on Arrow Highway could be moved up by 5 miles per hour despite safety concerns expressed by city staff and the community. The issue came up at Monday's Traffic and Transportation Commission meeting.

A speed survey was recently completed on Arrow Highway following the installation of a traffic signal at Elder Drive. The survey found that motorists go on average about 8 to 10 miles per hour over the speed limit on the street.

On the western edge of the city between Cambridge Avenue and Indian Hill Boulevard, the speed limit could be raised to 45 miles per hour. It was previously 40 miles per hour. Between Indian Hill Boulevard and Claremont Boulevard, the limit could be raised from 35 miles per hour to 40 miles per hour.

City Engineer Loretta Mustafa said the city is required under state law to increase the speed limit according to the results of speed surveys. If they go unchanged, any contested speeding ticket given out on Arrow Highway would not hold up in court.

"We're recommending the lowest speed limit allowed under state requirements that can still be en-



COURIER photo/Steven Felschundneff
Vehicles travel east on Arrow Highway on Monday in Claremont. The Claremont Traffic and Transportation Commission discussed raising the speed limit on Arrow at a special meeting Monday evening.

forceable," Ms. Mustafa.

With the Montessori Preschool located on Arrow Highway and Oakmont Outdoor School not far away, residents said speeding is already a problem on the street, particularly in the residential area east of Indian Hill Boulevard.

Ana and Raymond Contreras, who live at the corner of Arrow Highway and Claremont Boulevard, spoke out against raising the speed limit. Ms. Contreras said she has called 911 on several occasions be-

cause of collisions outside of her home or just down the street.

"It just seems that drivers don't care," Ms. Contreras said.

Commissioners felt their hands were tied over the issue. They did not want to raise the speed limit due to the safety concerns, but also recognized the city's obligations under state law.

"I'm totally dismayed that the state decides on what is safe in our neighborhoods," Commission Chair Anne McLoughlin said.

Commissioners asked if another speed survey can be conducted in 6 months to see if the results are lower. Ms. Mustafa warned that after the speed limits increase, motorists will likely drive faster. So a new speed survey could result in the city being forced to increase the speed limit again.

"This is what's called 'speed creep' and it's been a problem for cities all over the state," Ms. Mustafa said.

The commission approved the staff recommendation to increase the speed limit. They also wanted to see traffic calming measures installed and letters written from the city to state lawmakers asking for greater local control on speed limits.

The city council has the final say on the speed limit and will discuss the issue at an upcoming meeting in January.

—Tony Krickl

Grants provide funding for new media studies center

As the result of 2 grants totaling \$1 million from the Ahmanson Foundation, Pitzer College will be creating a new Center for Media Studies within a new multi-use facility that will break ground this month. The project is part of the 2nd phase of the college's ongoing residential life project.

"We are so pleased with the Ahmanson Foundation's support of Pitzer's Media Studies Program. It is one of the best such programs in the country, and the Foundation's gift will make it even stronger," said Pitzer College President Laura Trombley.

Pitzer's Media Studies Program is an "interdisciplinary field that explores the histories, technologies and social and cultural contexts of a range of contemporary media forms, including mechanical and electronic media such as film, video, print and the Internet, as well as other contemporary forms of culture." The program offers 70 courses per semester with specific focuses in Film/Video, Digital Electronic Media and Critical Studies.

The popular major has experienced one of the biggest increases among the



Rendering courtesy of Pitzer College
The Center for Media Studies, seen here in an artists's rendering, will be home to Pitzer College's Media Studies Program due in part to \$1 million in grants secured from the Ahmanson Foundation.

Claremont Colleges over the past several years. Student participation in the program has grown 150 percent and the number of degrees awarded has risen by 50 percent.

The new facility (estimated at 7400 square feet) will provide a new production area, academic space, offices, editing bays, equipment checkout and a lounge. The building will also be a residential space for Pitzer College students.

"With our program, we have students from all the campuses who come

to take production courses," said Media Studies Academic Director Tracy Biga MacLean. "We work out of just a couple of offices in the Mead dorm and we have our production facilities in the basement of Scott Hall. So we've done a lot with what we've had. But 8 years ago was when we started turning towards having a new production space."

Pitzer College student Janet Alexander, a media studies major, agrees the program has outgrown its current space. Though she will graduate in May 2011, she appreciates the college

giving the department a better location.

"As my major, of course it is nice to think of how the program is growing, expanding and has a need for newer facilities," Ms. Alexander. "Having a bigger and newer facility would be nice. Right now, we're all making the best of the situation. The basement has its own culture. There are no windows and I think there's a camaraderie that we've developed over not seeing the light of day. But to be able to do this without having to raise the costs at Pitzer is great."

Like Pitzer's other recently built residence halls, the college plans to make the new facility a Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED)-certified project. The school is also hoping to attain a "Platinum" distinction, LEED's highest rating.

Ms. MacLean said that the new facility might be ready for use in the fall of 2012. In the meantime, she and other members of the faculty will continue to emphasize what is the foundation of the Media Studies Program—student creativity through various vehicles of media.

"We encourage students to be very creative about the projects they do," Ms. MacLean said. "Now, we're just equipping it to further reflect the goals of our program."

—Landus Rigsby