

# News Release



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## Economic Spurt Coming for the Orange Coast

### **Construction to Begin on New El Moro Campground**

California State Parks announced today that the much-anticipated construction of the El Moro Campground at Crystal Cove State Park is set to begin this month.

This week, State Parks awarded a \$12 million public works project contract to Los Angeles Engineering, Inc. for the conversion of the former El Moro Village trailer park site to a state park campground, beach, and picnic area. The project is set to begin in mid July and is expected to be open to the public by early 2010.

“This is a project that will provide construction jobs to build the park and tourism visitors to fill the park and spur the Orange Coast economy,” said Ruth Coleman, director of California State Parks. “This is one example of what the Governor wants in public-private partnerships. We are using public bond funds for a private company to build a visitor destination that is an investment in the future of the local economy.”

The project is approved in the Governor’s 2007/2008 budget and is financed by voter approved Proposition 12 park bond funds. Project highlights include a sixty-site family campground, two-hundred day use parking spaces, park and school entry upgrades, road and trail improvements, creek restoration, picnic areas, hiking trails, native plant and habitat restoration, an outdoor educational amphitheatre, water quality improvements, restoration of the beach and shoreline, interpretive exhibits, public restroom facilities, and a lifeguard facility for public safety and protection.

With 60 overnight campsites and 200 day use parking spaces, the park could see an influx, on just weekends alone, of more than 100,000 added tourists traveling to the area, buying gas, groceries and other supplies, and taking advantage of local restaurants and other tourism businesses. Park use fee revenues from camping, day use, and special events could generate as much as an additional one million per year to support California State Parks.

When the El Moro campground opens, it will be the first coastal campground to be added to the system in roughly 20 years. Its completion is doubly important, because it will be offering new camping opportunities in an urban area where the demand for coastal camping spaces has far outstripped the supply. With that popularity for the coastal park camping, it can be predicted that this park could be sold-out on the first day reservations are opened.

As an example of the popularity of state park camping system-wide, on February 1st of this year, when reservations opened for the month of August, more than 11,000 reservations were made within the first 30 minutes and more than 19,000 reservations were made that day. That is an all-time record that is a 10% growth over 2007 and a 23% growth over 2006. It should be noted the figures do not represent an increase in campsites sold, but an increase in the competition for the same number of sites that have existed for years.

The 35 acre project site is located within the boundaries of the 2,791 acre Crystal Cove State Park located on one of the last undeveloped stretches of the Orange County coastline. The park was purchased in 1979 from the The Irvine Company for just over \$32 million.

For additional information, please contact the park office at (949) 494-3539.

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