

Work to begin on Campbell Parkway

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TAMPA — Look at it this way: After today, there'll be only 579 more days to go.

Work is scheduled to begin today on more than a year's worth of improvements to the Hillsborough side of the Courtney Campbell Parkway. Officials are spending \$14.1-million to add a barrier wall down the center of the road and a seawall and guard rails along both sides of the causeway, something that's already been done on the Pinellas side.

While work is under way, thousands of motorists who use the causeway daily may encounter slow-moving traffic and occasional lane closures, despite attempts to keep inconveniences from the project to a minimum, transportation officials said.

Once work is complete, planners hope the changes will end the parkway's notoriety as one of the deadliest stretches of motorway in Florida. But in the meantime, drivers are urged to drive carefully through the construction area, from Eisenhower Boulevard to the east end of the big humpback bridge.

Signs warning motorists of the construction go up today, the first of 580 days in the construction company's contract. By mid-week,

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workers should be laying the groundwork for a seawall on the north side of the causeway, said Charles L. Floyd, project engineer for the state Department of Transportation.

Work on the seawall will close the outer westbound lane of traffic, but only during non-peak hours. Under the construction contract, no lanes in either direction can be closed weekdays between 6 and 9 a.m. and from 4 to 10 p.m., Floyd said.

"We want to minimize delays as much as we can," Floyd said. "We're not out to delay anyone. But if folks want this done, they'll have to put up with a little inconvenience."

The northern seawall, which will be protected by rocks at the water's edge, will take three to five months to complete.

Then, Floyd said, the following work is planned:

■ Lanes in both directions will be widened and resurfaced. While lanes in one direction are

being improved, traffic will be shifted to the other side.

■ A 3-foot-high barrier wall, separating eastbound and westbound lanes, will be built, just like the one on the Pinellas side. Workers also will add lighting and an emergency lane on both sides of the median wall.

■ Several breaks will be left in the median for emergency vehicles and to provide access to beach and fishing areas. Stop lights will be added at three of the median openings.

■ A seawall will be added on the south side of the causeway, also buffered by rocks. The seawall will spare only Ben T. Davis Municipal Beach. Other sandy areas not part of that beach will be replaced with seawall and rocks, Floyd said.

In construction areas, signs will warn motorists to drive 35 mph, rather than the 40-mph posted limit, Floyd said. Motorists who break the suggested 35-mph limit can be charged with careless driving under a new law taking effect Oct. 1, Floyd said.

The speed limit will be vigorously enforced with additional patrols, Floyd said.

"Hopefully, that'll keep people from running into us, much less each other," he said.

The prime contractor on the project is R.S. Futch Construction Inc., of Ocala.

LH - COURTNEY CAMPBELL CAUSEWAY

(Please see * FENCE, next page)

Secretary of Transportation Tom Draddy "assured us he was sympathetic to our problem and that he would look into it," Bomstein said. According to the Chamber president, Draddy sided with the Chamber on whether the fence is necessary, and told Bomstein he would have his staff assess the need for such a fence and then determine from what materials it could be built. Dave Bullard, the DOT's chief design engineer,

asking the DOT to consider other means to achieve the same pedestrian safety measures without marring the natural beauty of the causeway. Rather than appeasing Bomstein and the Chamber, the 2-foot concession has only whetted their appetites for further yielding on the DOT's part. The undesirable chain-link fence, therefore, was a topic of discussion Wednesday when

The state Department of Transportation plans to install a 4-foot chain-link fence along the entire Courtney Campbell Parkway on both sides. The fencing, originally set at a height of 6 feet, is part of some \$11 million in scheduled improvements along the scenic roadway linking Clearwater and Tampa. The 2-foot height concession came less than a month after Bomstein mounted a drive among local politicians and Chambers of Commerce