

## COLTON

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feet in the air over the BNSF north-south tracks, so the two rail lines no longer cross and stops are no longer needed. The fly-over, featuring two tracks, runs parallel to Interstate 10 from Rancho Avenue on the west to Mt. Vernon Avenue on the east.

"Both (rail lines) were not being as efficient as we could be when we were traveling through there," said Lupe Valdez, spokeswoman for Union Pacific, which oversaw construction of the project.

Both railways run trains 24 hours a day through the corridor — about 80 every day, down from more than 100 before the recession.

"We don't want trains stopped somewhere," Valdez said. "That doesn't help anybody."

Transportation officials say the project will reduce wait times for motorists at rail crossings as well as noise and air pollution from idling locomotives. The project also is important in boosting the Inland region's vital role in the goods movement industry, said Ray Wolfe, executive director of San Bernardino Associated Governments, which oversaw planning for the project.

"Projects that help to increase the ability to move



KURT MILLER/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The Colton Crossing as seen from below in Colton. The 1.4-mile overpass raises Union Pacific's east-west tracks 43 feet in the air over the BNSF north-south tracks, so the two rail lines no longer cross and stops are no longer needed.

goods quickly through the region are important to our overall competitiveness in the global marketplace," Wolfe said.

For long-suffering Colton residents, the project promises relief from the constant sound of horns blowing as trains made their way through the crossing. Federal law requires trains to sound their horns as they ap-

proach a crossing, but that is no longer necessary with the fly-over.

As part of the project, the railroads also agreed to install improved train gates and an electronic signal system that will create quiet zones at other rail crossings in the city so trains won't need to blow their horns there either.

Passenger rail also should

see some improvements. The Union Pacific line also is used by Amtrak, and BNSF has agreed to allow additional Metrolink trains to run on its line.

"It's a good example of a public-private partnership all coming together," said Lena Kent, spokeswoman for BNSF. "It's good for passenger service and it's good for freight service."



Railroad workers remove old tracks near the Colton Crossing. The fly-over, featuring two tracks, runs parallel to Interstate 10 from Rancho Avenue on the west to Mt. Vernon Avenue on the east.

Construction began in November 2011, and one track on the overpass opened in June.

"It's a long time coming and it's good to see it finally finishing up," Wolfe said.

The project originally was budgeted for \$202 million, but SANBAG says the final cost will be \$96.7 million because of design changes, lowered property acquisition needs and construction costs going down during the recession.

The project was funded through \$33.8 million in federal stimulus dollars, \$41 million in state bond money and \$3.7 million from Caltrans for environmental studies. The railroads contributed \$18 million.

It was several years before the railroads, Colton and SANBAG could agree on a project design and figure out a funding formula. At one point, Colton had sought a trench design that would have involved tunneling underneath the freeway and was estimated to cost \$2 billion.

As part of the agreement, SANBAG has promised other improvements that will be built in Colton in the coming months. An underpass is planned at Laurel Street and a railroad line that runs through a residential neighborhood around Ninth Street is being removed.

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TERRY PIERSON/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Riverside native and Cal Baptist University adjunct voice teacher Sarah Horn, 26, says her prayers were answered Friday night, Aug. 23, at the Hollywood Bowl when she was pulled out of the audience to sing a duet with Tony award-winning actress Kristin Chenoweth. The chance encounter has been viewed 1.7 million times on YouTube in a matter of days.

## SINGER

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her back to town when, after earning a degree in commercial music at Nashville's Belmont University, she enrolled at California Baptist University. She graduated in May 2012 with master's degrees in vocal performance and conducting.

She was hired as an adjunct voice teacher at Cal Baptist in fall 2012. She currently has 24 students and is also the conductor of the Chamber Singers.

## MUSICAL LIFE

Sarah's parents, Gary and Kay Horn, both brought music to her life.

She said her theater-loving dad has been a season ticket holder since he was 20 years old for a variety of theater troupes. Her mom is a pianist.

Sarah started voice lessons when she was 6 years old and it wasn't because of a love of music. She had developed nodules on her vocal cords due to a dairy allergy and the clearing of her throat. The doctor sent her first to a voice therapist. After six months, the therapist recommended voice lessons.

Her first public performance was at age 8 at her church. And she was terrified.

"I put the mic back where it belonged and I ran back to my seat," she said.

Growing up, she performed in Riverside Youth Theatre. Her first named role was as the nasty Miss Hannigan in "Annie Jr."

"She had a lovely voice as a young child," said Debbie Wolgemuth, director of the Riverside Youth Theatre, who once taught Horn and

See video of Sarah Horn at [pe.com/IGuide](http://pe.com/IGuide) and see the full performance by searching "Sarah Horn" on YouTube.com

now works alongside Horn, the group's resident musical director since 2010.

Wolgemuth said Horn put in the hard work to develop her voice even further, but said as the singer's voice got stronger, she didn't develop a diva attitude to match its power.

"Sarah's always had a very gentle spirit and humility," Wolgemuth said.

## THE LUCKY DUET

Sarah, her parents and Kestler had been counting down to Chenoweth's show for months. They originally had seats in the benches, but Gary Horn surprised them with box seats at the show.

Then, they switched boxes with another group and ended up in the front, where Horn volunteered when Chenoweth came into the audience. The star asked a woman in front of the Horn party if she knew "For Good."

She didn't. So Horn volunteered to sing the song she had sung more than 100 times in her bedroom. Chenoweth talked to her for a bit before advancing to another audience member.

"Then the impossible happened. I got to sing a duet with Kristin Chenoweth," Horn said.

Kestler, who is Horn's accompanist at Cal Baptist, filmed the performance juggling his phone camera while pumping his fist into the air at times.

"When she was up there, my thought was, 'It's about time,' because I've seen her dedication and I've seen just how hard she pushes herself," he said.

During the performance,

Chenoweth was impressed with Horn's harmony.

"Note to self: don't have anyone better than you," Chenoweth joked after the song was over.

"That was so inspiring, girl," Chenoweth continued a few moments later from the stage.

After the show, Kestler uploaded the video to YouTube. It took all night to post and finally went up Saturday morning.

"Honestly, I was a little skeptical. I thought maybe just our friends and some of the people at the Bowl would look it up," Kestler said.

By the time Horn went to bed early Saturday night, the video had 5,000 views. On Sunday morning, it was up to 80,000. The video was screened at her church, Relevant, which meets in the movie theater at Riverside Plaza.

"Oh, I'm part of the opening announcements, I must have made it big," Horn said.

She still seemed incredulous when informed that the views on the video were upwards of 1.5 million by Monday afternoon.

"The knees went a little weak there. I'm glad people like it," she said.

And Horn hopes it's not her last chance to perform with Chenoweth.

"I would really, really hope to sing another duet with Kristin, but have a little more warning," Horn said with a smile.

Visit [www.facebook.com/sarahhornmusic](http://www.facebook.com/sarahhornmusic) for more on Sarah Horn. Follow Vanessa Franko on Twitter: @vanessafranko and on the Audio File blog at <http://blog.pe.com/audio-file>

## MARCH

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press it. He was heaven-sent."

Rucker-Hughes on Wednesday will help lead a Riverside commemoration of the march on the downtown mall, to pay tribute but also to talk of how economic, educational, health and other disparities that African-Americans still face illustrate how King's dream remains unrealized.

King was assassinated in 1968 in Memphis.

Other Inland residents who attended the March on Washington or watched from afar also are helping put together the commemoration or plan to be part of it.

King's speech spurred Gloria Willis into a lifetime of activism. Jennifer Vaughn-Blakely's parents sent her to California to escape the Jim Crow South that King described in his address.

Today Rucker-Hughes, 66, is president of the Riverside chapter of the NAACP. In 1963, she was a 16 and living in Washington, D.C.

Segregation was not just a Deep South phenomenon. Rucker-Hughes remembered how three or four years after the march she was traveling with her college basketball team — she was a cheerleader — and the group stopped at a restaurant in rural Maryland.

"We sat and sat and nobody came," Rucker-Hughes recalled. "The coach got up and asked the waitress to bring menus, and he came back and looked agitated and upset."

The server had told him, using a racial slur, that the restaurant would not serve black people "today, tomorrow or ever, and that if he knows what is good for him, we'd get out of here before dark," she said.

That type of constant reminder — that she was not equal under the law — was a prime motivator for Rucker-Hughes to attend the first March on Washington. She arrived at 7 a.m., picked up a "Jobs and Equality for All" sign and watched thousands of people arrive by foot and bus.

The diversity of the crowd gave Rucker-Hughes hope that the civil rights movement would succeed.

"There was black and white and brown and Native American, women, men, young, old — everyone was coming together and cheering," she said. "It said to black America, 'You are not in this by yourself.'"

The crowd, Rucker-Hughes said, was a glimpse into a future time when, as King said in his address, "little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls and walk together as sisters and brothers."

Even though "I Have a Dream" is considered one of



KURT MILLER/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Woodie Rucker-Hughes, president of the Riverside NAACP, attended the March on Washington in 1963, when she was a teenager. "It was God-inspired," Rucker-Hughes says of the speech.

the great speeches in modern history, King had used similar words in addresses over the previous months, said Norris Nunley, an associate professor of English at UC Riverside.

## TIME AND PLACE KEY

But the phrasing was especially powerful when delivered in the nation's Capitol at a time when civil-rights activists were being murdered and jailed.

"With the time and place, it came together in a way it didn't come together before," Nunley said.

In the speech, King talked of how black people had come to Washington "to cash a check" for the promises of liberty, equality and opportunity made in the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence.

"By doing that, he made it not just a black speech, but an American speech," Nunley said.

Willis, of Riverside, traveled to the march from New York, where she lived at the time.

After witnessing the sometimes deadly brutality that Southern segregationists used against civil-rights activists, she and others on the racially mixed bus were nervous that the Ku Klux Klan or another group would greet their arrival with violence. But that didn't stop them.

"I felt that here was a man who put his life on the line for us," she said. "I thought this was something I had to do. I had to support him."

Before the march, Willis, 68, who was 18 at the time, had participated in some protests in New York against housing discrimination and police brutality. But King's speech, and his call for marchers to return to their homes and fight for justice, led her to get more involved.

She continued her activism after she moved to Riverside, running for office several times and participating in a number of demonstrations, most recently a protest last month against the

acquittal of George Zimmerman in the killing of Trayvon Martin.

Willis credits the "I Have a Dream" speech with inspiring her.

"I felt we had to live what he wanted us to do," she said.

## SEGREGATION REALITIES

Vaughn-Blakely was watching scenes from Washington on the nightly television news.

Vaughn-Blakely, 65, of Riverside, was 14 then and lived in Vicksburg, Miss.

The atmosphere in Mississippi was tense. A little more than two months before the March on Washington, civil-rights activist Medgar Evers was shot dead by a white supremacist 40 miles from Vaughn's home.

Vaughn-Blakely, chairwoman of The Group, which focuses on issues of concern to Riverside's African-American community, remembered that as she and her family sat watching television coverage of the march, no one said a word.

Vaughn-Blakely's parents and relatives always tried their best to shield her from the turmoil of civil-rights-era Mississippi. It was only years later that she found out that her father, aunt and uncle had surreptitiously been attending voter-registration meetings at night. They never told their children, for safety reasons.

"They never talked about the suffering and pain of living such a segregated and racist life," she said.

But her parents couldn't hide the whites-only lunch counter at Walgreens that Vaughn-Blakely passed by every time the family picked up a prescription at the pharmacy. They couldn't make the segregated drinking fountains disappear.

In 1964, Vaughn-Blakely was sent to San Bernardino to live with her uncle. Her parents, she said, wanted to make sure she would have the opportunities that were denied them.

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