

Monday, April 14, 2008

The Big Dig

From 10 p.m. Friday until late Sunday afternoon, Mariposa Point was a beehive of activity, round the clock, building a pedestrian access to the beach.

By **FRED SWEGLES**

SUN POST NEWS

Friday night, they stopped the trains. The RR track was lifted off. Excavators dug deep. A crane hoisted heavy concrete blocks. Sections interlocked. Spectators gawked. The hole was refilled. By late Sunday afternoon, the track was put back.

That's how John S. Meek Co., working 24 hours a day, dug a ditch and inserted a pedestrian tunnel under the railroad track, over the weekend at San Clemente's Mariposa Point.

The underpass won't open until June. There are still finishing touches, plus extension of an elevated boardwalk over the tunnel.

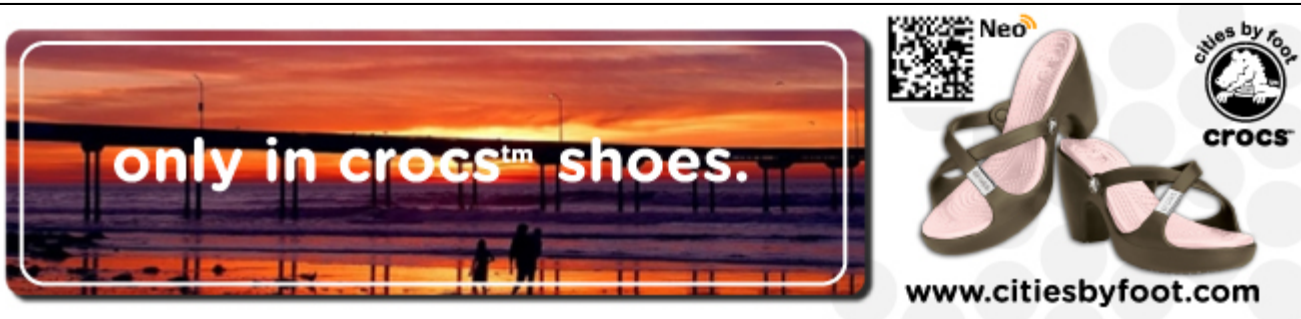
"We're glad that it's in," project manager Tom Bonigut said Monday. "That was a big milestone."

Michael Metcalf, a neighborhood resident who lobbied the city to build the tunnel, said, "That's the most spectacular thing that's happened to Mariposa Point in decades – since El Niño. Magnificent."

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