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## **NET RMA Announces Priority Project Winners**

**(Tyler, TX)** – For the second year in a row, the North East Texas Regional Mobility Authority (NET RMA) will give back to the East Texas region. Last year, the NET RMA awarded Gregg County \$400,000 in funds towards the reconstruction and improvement of intersection US 259 at Hawkins Parkway. This year, the Agency is extremely pleased to award funds to three counties. The NET RMA will present Kaufman County a check in the amount of \$77,817, Upshur County will receive \$250,000 for its project submittal, and Wood County will receive \$172,183.

Funds generated by revenues from Toll 49 in 2016 were carefully allocated to these counties by NET RMA’s Long-Range Planning Committee. Committee members met and scored each county’s priority project application based upon several key factors: regional significance, local and political support, local financial support, economic development potential, and potential revenue production. The projects with the highest scores were then selected to receive funding. “The mission of the NET RMA is to increase mobility in East Texas. When we can give back to a community that has supported us; that’s when we feel most satisfied,” said Chris Miller, Executive Director of the NET RMA. “We are thrilled to be at a point where we can consistently give back to the very counties that have supported the Agency over the years,” said current NET RMA Chair Linda Thomas, “This was one of our goals from the start—to keep revenues local and to reinvest those funds in a meaningful way.”

In each instance, the NET RMA’s funding and support will greatly help accelerate the projects development, thus achieving its goal of increasing mobility in the East Texas Region. The proposals submitted by Judge Wood (Kaufman County), Judge Fowler (Upshur County), and Judge Jeanes (Wood County) each presented their own unique set of benefits.

In Kaufman county, intersection improvements at SH 243/FM 2727 will improve safety and efficiency by widening the intersection, and adding turning lanes and road signs. The NET RMA eagerly supported the Kaufman County intersection project knowing the purpose of the project is to enhance safety and that the county and voters are behind the project as they recently committed to a county bond package.

Upshur County's project is a feasibility study for the construction of a loop around Gilmer to help improve congestion, safety (especially in school zones), as well as open new economic development opportunities within the community. The feasibility study will identify the possible routes, benefits and conceptual costs for a Gilmer loop. The NET RMA was also enthusiastic about supporting this initiative as it will improve safety around the school by reducing traffic and relieving congestion on the important US 271 corridor.

Lastly, in Wood County, the development of water, sewer and natural gas infrastructure in support of the Northeast Texas Poultry Complex (Sanderson Farms) will help spur the development of a project that is predicted to generate thousands of new jobs in East Texas as well as bring in commercial freight traffic on roads and rail. The NET RMA was intrigued by this project as it is the largest agricultural and food processing project currently pending in the entire state of Texas. Each project is unique in its own right and each merits the support of the NET RMA to further transportation, economic development, and safety in the East Texas Region.

#### **About the North East Texas Regional Mobility Authority (NET RMA)**

The NET RMA is an independent government agency created to accelerate the development of transportation projects in North East Texas. Our mission is to implement transportation solutions that will enhance the quality of life and the economic environment in our area. The NET RMA is governed by a 19-member board of directors that represent each of the member counties: Bowie, Kaufman, Cherokee, Gregg, Harrison, Panola, Rusk, Smith, Titus, Upshur, Wood and Van Zandt. Texas RMAs were made possible through an initiative passed by State Legislature in 2001. The NET RMA was established in October 2004.

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