

## **NET RMA, Rusk County Agreement Helps Loop 571 Expand**

HENDERSON -- Plans to extend Loop 571 around Henderson are moving ahead thanks to a new agreement between North East Texas Regional Mobility Authority and Rusk County.

The agreement allows Rusk County to use NET RMA resources to complete schematics, plans, specifications, and estimates and preparation of reports and permits, said information from NET RMA.

Plans are to extend the loop about 3.5 miles between U.S. highways 79 and 259 which will enable traffic on U.S. 259 to bypass Henderson. The road will initially be two lanes with shoulders, with future plans to expand to a four-lane divided highway, the information said.

The Loop 571 project has been dormant since the first phase was completed nearly a decade ago.

"The interlocal agreement gives Rusk County a new breath of life in transportation going forward," said Rusk County NET RMA board member John Cloutier. "This partnership with the NET RMA will use the strength of the entire region to elevate a rural priority project. Loop 571 could not have been resurrected were it not for this team concept."

The agreement will allow Rusk County to move forward with the project sooner, Rusk County Judge Sandra Hodges said.

"We've worked to do our part as a county, and now the RMA will be able to help get the project started," she said.

NET RMA Chairman Jeff Austin III said the organization is pleased to help one of its member counties meet transportation goals.

"This is a great example of what regional partnerships can do," Austin said. "By working together to establish priorities and pool resources, we will begin to see projects take off. I am excited for the citizens of Rusk County and northeast Texas."