

Work on Next Segment of Loop 49 Project Ready to Start

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The Smith County Commissioners Court received transportation reports regarding mobility needs and ongoing projects Monday during its regular meeting.

Tab Beall of the North East Texas Regional Mobility, and Jamal Moharer from the Smith County Transportation Advisory Committee and East Texas Transportation Coordination Steering Committee presented reports on mobility initiatives.

Beall said that funding for Segment 5 of Loop 49 is available and the project is ready to get under way. The completion of Segment 5 would connect Texas highways 110 and 155, creating nine miles of roadway.

He said NET RMA is working to prepare plans so that the project would be eligible for federal funding that might be available as part of President Barack Obama's stimulus package.

If that funding is secured, Beall said Loop 49 would be ready to extend west to Texas Highway 31.

"One of our strengths is our ability to work with the different local entities, commissioners court, the city and chambers of commerce and others to make sure we secure the transportation requirements for the region," Beall said. "We all benefit from better mobility."

Moharer asked the court to support STAC's request that NET RMA be the primary voice for area mobility entities when dealing with TxDOT and other state and federal agencies. Presently rules designate East Texas Council of Governments as the transportation voice and Moharer said the mobility authority would do a better job of expediting construction initiatives.

The court agreed and plans to prepare a letter of support for NET RMA.

The court also approved acceptance of more than \$97,000 from the Task Force on Indigent Defense Statement for Grant Award FY2009 Formula Grant and Spindlemedia contracts, including the Software Licensing Agreement and the Software Maintenance Agreement to update the tax office's ability to process tax information.