

## [NET RMA Board Meeting To Focus On Federal Stimulus Funds](#)

### **Board to discuss today what projects could qualify as 'shovel ready', thereby making federal funding possible**

Dewayne Spell, The Upshur Advocate

Feb. 18, 2009 -- In their last meeting on Jan. 15th, The North East Texas Regional Mobility Authority (NET RMA) heard Titus County Judge Sam Russell say that Texas is facing a challenge when it comes to transportation funding.

"It will be slim pickings not only in Texas, but across the United States," Russell said during the meeting. "But maybe by working together we can get these projects accomplished."

With that said, board members did see a glimmer of funding hope in the huge financial stimulus package that was being talked about at the time on Capitol Hill, and has since been passed.

The Board discussed the possibility of accelerating work on Toll 49 Segment 3A so that the project might be included in the economic stimulus package being prepared by the Federal government. In order to be considered, the government has stipulated that projects must be "Shovel Ready," which means they have completed environmental clearance, engineering, the land acquisition process, and utility adjustments.

"We are keeping a close eye on the possibility of obtaining federal funding," said NET RMA Chairman Jeff Austin, III. "The NET RMA wants to be in a position to act if the opportunity presents itself."

In today's meeting, board members hope to further that goal. One of the meeting's agenda items is a report on possible actions the Authority could take to secure available federal funding.

Board members will also consider participation in the East Texas Steering Committee for Regional Transit Coordination Planning, as well as hear numerous reports on the status of transportation projects across the region