

NET RMA Continues to Seek Funding

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LINDEN -- The North East Texas Regional Mobility Authority (NET RMA) continued to focus on funding at its board meeting this week. In one key item, board members agreed to support a resolution to seek stimulus funding. The \$787 billion stimulus bill, which was signed by President Barack Obama on Tuesday, is expected to provide the state with up to \$2.2 billion in funding for highway projects and \$2.5 billion in overall transportation funding. "We look forward to learning more about what will be in the stimulus package," said NET RMA Chairman Jeff Austin, III. "We have projects that are essential to the economic growth and quality of life of our region's citizens, so we would like to be considered."

In other action, the NET RMA Board moved to request that toll revenue generated by open segments of Toll 49 be redirected from TxDOT to the NET RMA. The NET RMA asked TxDOT to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that, in addition to transferring funds, would also lead to the eventual transfer of project ownership to the NET RMA, and repayment of maintenance and operation costs. "The NET RMA will use the money generated from Toll 49 to help fund other segments of the road," Austin said. "That's the beauty of this structure. Unlike gas tax, which is collected and then disbursed throughout the country and state, the toll revenue that East Texans have invested will be used to build projects locally that East Texans will benefit from."