

## TxDOT puts stimulus funds to work

Tyler district to spend \$12M on local projects

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AUSTIN — Texas Department of Transportation officials recommended that roadway, transit, and aviation projects be funded under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), commonly known as the economic stimulus package, at a cost of \$505,675,806 million.

Stimulus fund spending was approved by the Texas Transportation Commission Monday, but another vote is scheduled Thursday for the remainder of the \$2.25 billion allotted to Texas transportation projects by the federal government.

The commission approved stimulus funds for 266 roadway and bridge maintenance and rehabilitation projects, including:

- 182 roadway maintenance projects valued at approximately \$370 million;
- 27 roadway rehabilitation projects valued at approximately \$73 million;
- 47 bridge projects valued at approximately \$31 million; and
- 10 projects that are local and regional safety enhancements projects valued at approximately \$30 million.

Those Tyler District projects approved by the TxDOT Commission today include the following projects at a total value of

\$25.3 million:

- \* Gregg County — US 259, resurface between I-20 frontage and US 80 in Longview, \$3.1 million; and US 80, resurface between Spur 63/SH 31 intersection and US 259 in Longview, \$2.5 million.
- \* Rusk County — US 259, resurface between Kilgore and FM 850 in Jacobs, \$4.5 million.
- \* Van Zandt County — SH 243, bridge rehabilitation at Caney Creek, \$250,000; and SH 110, build turn lane at new Van school sports complex in Van, \$1 million.
- \*Smith County — US 69, resurface between IH20 and North Loop 323 in Tyler, \$4 million; and FM 344, add shoulders and resurface between FM 346 in Teaselville and US 69 in Bullard, \$2.5 million.

\* Wood County — US 69, resurface between just south of US 80 in Mineola and US 69/SH 37 split in Mineola, \$1.6 million; and SH 37, resurface between US 69/SH 37 split in Mineola and North FM 564 in Mineola, \$1 million.

\* Anderson County — US 84, add shoulders between FM 3266 east of Palestine and Anderson/Cherokee county line, \$4.8 million.

"These are all high-priority projects that were identified through cooperation with our local community leaders," said Tyler District Engineer Randy Hopmann. "We realize that there are still many more needs out there than were funded through this legislation, but this project list lets us clear some of our biggest needs off the books and helps bring those other needs closer to the starting line."

"The underlying goal of the ARRA is to put people to work by creating and retaining jobs," said State Rep. Tommy Merritt, R-Longview. "By investing this \$12 million dollars into the Tyler District, we feel we are doing our part to get the economy going again. The ARRA provides us with a unique opportunity to invest in the maintenance of our system that we would otherwise not be able to afford."

Merritt said he commends Gregg County Judge Bill Stoudt, Smith County Judge Joel Baker, and Northeast Texas Regional Mobility Authority Chairman Jeff Austin III for working collectively to present projects to TxDOT "that promote sound transportation decisions."

The funding level for each TxDOT district was based on population, lane miles, vehicle traffic, and pavement conditions. Once the funding level was allocated, the District Engineers identified the needed projects based on bridge and pavement conditions, as well as geometric needs and coordination with local officials, he said.