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## **TOLL 49 SEGMENT 3B GROUNDBREAKING**

**Tyler, Texas – January 21, 2011**

The North East Texas Regional Mobility Authority (NET RMA) celebrated the start of the next piece of the Toll 49 system with the groundbreaking for Segment 3B at the site just off HWY 64 East of Tyler. The groundbreaking has been a long time coming for the NET RMA and for the residents of East Texas; it was an exciting event. Approximately 50 people braved the 32 degree temperature this morning; among them were some of our community leaders such as Senator Kevin Eltife, Judge Joel Baker, Sheriff J.B. Smith, University of Texas at Tyler President Rod Mabry, President of the Tyler Economic Development Council President & the Tyler Chamber of Commerce, Tom Mullins. The event was well attended by TxDOT Tyler District as well as other members of the East Texas area including members of the NET RMA board. Senator Kevin Eltife commented that, "I don't know of any community project that this city has set out to complete that it hasn't completed; all by working together, not separately."

Segment 3B has been much anticipated due to the fact that not only will it complete the Toll 49 system to I-20 but it will do so in a record 22-month build time. Back in June 2010, the NET RMA selected CH2M Hill, Inc. as the design-build developer who proposed the lightning fast timeline. Segment 3B connects to western the segment of Toll 49 that is currently under construction at SH 31 and proceeds north to connect with Interstate 20.

The NET RMA has worked diligently in a partnership with TxDOT to further the development of Toll 49. Everett Owen, NET RMA Project Director, stated that without the help of TxDOT Tyler District Engineer, Randy Hopmann, this project would not be happening. On October 28, 2010 the

NET RMA received notification that the Texas Department of Transportation approved up to \$90 million for construction of Toll 49 Segment 3B by funding the project with two forms of loans: a State Infrastructure Bank Loan (SIB) for \$39.2 million and a Toll Equity loan for the remainder of the project cost. October's action constituted the final approval of the SIB loan. The Toll Equity Loan received final approval in November 2010. These actions also open the door for the NET RMA to start focusing on the next segments of Toll 49, namely, the Lindale Relief Route and the East Texas Hourglass.

Jeff Austin, III Chairman of the Board of the NET RMA stated, "East Texas has embraced an alternative plan to make this possible at a quicker pace. By 2012 the citizens of East Texas will be able to drive from HWY 110 all the way to I-20; I'm excited about this!", he exclaimed. Smith County Judge Joel Baker spoke & agreed with Jeff Austin, III in that, "many people would have given up on this dream but this community hasn't and it means a lot to our community and I look forward to seeing it through."

### **About the NET RMA**

The NET RMA is an independent government agency created to accelerate the development of transportation projects in North East Texas. Our mission is to implement transportation solutions that will enhance the quality of life and the economic environment in our area. The NET RMA is governed by a 19-member board of directors that represent each of the member counties: Bowie, Cass, Cherokee, Gregg, Harrison, Panola, Rusk, Smith, Titus, Upshur, Wood and Van Zandt. Texas RMAs were made possible through an initiative passed by State Legislature in 2001. The NET RMA was established in October 2004.

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