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Markell Announces List of Transportation Projects Receiving Funding from the Federal Economic Recovery Package

DOVER – Governor Jack Markell and Department of Transportation Secretary Carolann Wicks on Friday unveiled the final list of road, bridge, transit, bicycle and pedestrian projects to be funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

The Final List includes \$121.9 million for highways, bridges, pedestrian, bicycle and other projects, and \$19 million for transit-related projects. Fifty percent of the funding for highway projects must be ready to advertise in 120 days (June 2009) and 50 percent within one year (February 2010). Fifty percent of the funding for transit projects must be ready to advertise in 180 days (August 2009) and 50 percent within one year (February 2010).

The projects range from big-ticket items, such as the additional highway-speed E-ZPass lanes at the I-95 Toll Plaza and more than \$25 million worth of paving and rehabilitation work statewide, to safety projects such as traffic signal projects, guardrail replacement and bridge maintenance. Funding is being targeted not just for traditional road projects, but also for transit projects such as the first phase of a new Dover Transit Center, upgraded park-and-ride facilities and new rail cars and buses. The project list also includes money for raising South Market Street in Wilmington out of the flood plain and funding to refurbish the Rehoboth Beach Boardwalk, both designed to enhance economic opportunities in those areas.

In addition, as of this week, DelDOT is moving quickly to get people working by advertising three Pavement and Rehabilitation projects (two in Sussex County and one in New Castle County) and an intersection project at Route 10 and Sorghum Mill Road, Kent County. The projects are valued at \$9 million.

“The only way we are going to solve the historic challenges facing Delaware in the long term is by growing the economy,” Markell said. “These projects will help get our economy and our neighbors moving again, and will create hundreds of much-needed jobs to help get Delawareans to work.”

Delaware’s U.S. senators Tom Carper and Ted Kaufman said the transportation projects will meet a variety of transportation needs while creating and sustaining jobs.

Said Carper, “We worked hard to secure this funding for Delaware. Many of these projects have been dreams for years and we are thrilled they are finally going to become reality. These projects will keep Delawareans safer, move people and goods more efficiently, and offer a wider array of public transit options for getting around our state.”

Said Sen. Kaufman, "These plans, combined with the federal investment, mean more people, at more times, in more places will be able to travel efficiently throughout Delaware. Most importantly, it will help where we need it most -- job creation. In short, this is the kind of economic jump start I hoped for when I supported the economic recovery package."

Details on all the proposed projects can be found on DelDOT's Web site at www.deldot.gov, under the "Recovery Project" tab. Governor Markell is committed to keeping the public as up to date as possible regarding project progress, how funding is being spent, the number of jobs generated and the contractors who win the bids. The DelDOT Web site, www.deldot.gov, and the state Web site, www.recovery.delaware.gov will continue to be the focal point for this and more information.

Secretary Carolann Wicks said, "We worked extremely hard to get to this point, having to wade through a variety of rules and regulations. Over the next several months we will continue to roll out the advertising of projects funded by the Recovery Act. While the work itself will help the economy overall, our projects will improve our transportation system and make Delaware more attractive for economic development in the future."

Since Governor Markell announced the original Target List February 9, several public actions have been taken, including:

- February 17, President Barack Obama signed the ARRA.
- On March 23, the federally-required public comment period concluded for the Dover/Kent County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), Wilmington Area Planning Council (WILMAPCO) and Sussex County.

During the public comment period, DelDOT received more than a dozen requests to add projects to the Target List. One project met all the criteria needed to be considered: Overfalls Lightship bulkhead in Lewes, a \$400,000 project to construct a permanent home for the ship, which will act as a tourism and economic draw for the area. The only proposed project from the Target List deemed not ready to go was the Rehoboth Beach Park & Ride/Destination Station. It also garnered public opposition.

DelDOT may be able to apply for ARRA Discretionary Funds for the I-95 Toll Plaza and Rt. 1 and I-95 Interchange projects. Discretionary funds are competitive and DelDOT is awaiting the federal criteria and rules for submissions.

The Final Priority List

Roads, Bridges, Pedestrian and Bicycle Projects:

I-95 Toll Plaza -- \$43 million

Market Street Safety Project, Wilmington -- \$9 million

Pavement and Rehabilitation projects statewide -- \$26.3 million (go to www.deldot.gov for the full list)

Bridge Maintenance -- \$9.4 million

Traffic Signals -- \$1.5 million (go to www.deldot.gov for the full list)

Rt. 10 and Sorghum Road, Kent County -- \$400,000

Rehoboth Beach Boardwalk, Phase II and III -- \$7.5 million

New Castle County Greenway Millcreek -- \$1 million

New Castle County Greenway Industrial Track Phase I -- \$1.5 million

Overfalls Lightship Site Improvements, Lewes -- \$400,000

I-95 Concrete Medians -- \$1.2 million

Old Lancaster Pike (Hockessin) Streetscape/Drainage Project -- \$3.5 million

Centreville Streetscape/Traffic Calming -- \$3.7 million

New Castle County Guardrail Upgrades -- \$1 million

Transit-Related Projects:

Route 299 Park & Ride Improvements, Odessa -- \$1.4 million

Rt. 896 and Rt. 4 Park & Ride Improvements, Newark -- \$200,000 (of \$400,000 project)
Dover Transit Center, first phase -- \$5.7 million
4 Rail Cars -- \$8 million
Buses (Sussex County) -- \$1.9 million
DART Mid-County Facility -- \$7.2 million
The following projects will move forward if more ARRA funding becomes available:
Additional Sussex County Pavement and Rehabilitation projects
Rehabilitation of Epoxy Pavement Markings
Route 404/Newton Road Railroad Crossing, Bridgeville
Additional Bridge Maintenance projects

Final Project List

I-95 Newark Toll Plaza

Description: Reconstruct and reconfigure the Newark Toll Plaza to incorporate two highway-speed E-ZPass lanes in the northbound and southbound lanes.

Cost: Approximately \$43 million, to be obligated in the 1-year timeframe.

Justification: This toll plaza experiences high levels of congestion due to the current plaza configuration. As approximately 55 percent of travelers through the plaza utilize E-ZPass, congestion would be drastically reduced with high-speed lanes. This plaza is a regular complaint of motorists traveling through this state, and leaves travelers with a negative impression – in many cases their only impression -- of Delaware, impacting reputation, business, tourism and economic development. This project was scheduled to begin construction in 2011 or 2012.

Market Street Safety Project, Wilmington

Description: This project would elevate the roadway out of the floodplain. The limits are Market Street from "A" Street to just north of the Market/Walnut St. Split.

Cost: \$9 million, to be obligated in the 1-year timeframe.

Justification: The full project of elevating the road out of the floodplain would bring it to the level of other developments in the area, reducing the impact flooding has on residents and business.

Pavement and Rehabilitation Projects Statewide (go to www.deldot.gov for complete list)

Description: Paving and rehabilitation projects are targeted statewide and intended to improve the long term condition of the road system, ultimately avoiding costly replacement.

Cost: \$26.3 million within 120 days. An additional \$11 million is targeted for Sussex County within the one-year time period, funding permitting.

Justification: These projects are federally eligible, have little to no right of way and design issues and can be bid quickly. Jobs are to be spread out to many contractors. From an infrastructure perspective, maintaining roadways before they lapse into disrepair and require a major capital project is smart and economical in the long run.

Bridge Maintenance

Description: This would include various work on bridges along I-495, I-95 and in other locations. Work includes painting, approach slab replacement/repairs, overlay of decks, repair of expansion joints and bearings, repair of spalled concrete and replacement of deck and substructure.

Cost: \$9.4 million to start. Another \$11 million in work could be moved forward if more ARRA funding becomes available.

Justification: Maintenance of bridges is a priority as it's a significant step in ensuring these bridges are in satisfactory condition, and do not fall into the structurally deficient category.

2009 Traffic Signal Improvements Statewide (go to www.deldot.gov for more details)

Description: Traffic signal installation, upgrade, or reconstruction at nine intersections: New Castle County: SR 2 & Albertson Boulevard; US 13 & Boulden Boulevard; US 13 & Memorial Drive; US 202 & Righter Parkway; and, Mill Creek Road & McKennans Church Road. Kent County: US 13 & Lepore Road; US 13 & SR 42; and, Frederica Fire Signal. Sussex County: SR 1 & West Way Drive.

Cost: \$1.5 million

Justification: Improvements will improve traffic flow, vehicular safety, pedestrian safety, and the reliability of the system. Projects were initiated through a public complaint, through a study completed by our Traffic Studies Section, or through a request from our Signal Maintenance Section. Each intersection has a different scope of work, involving new signal installations, reconstruction of aging infrastructure, pedestrian signal enhancements, upgrade of curb ramps to current ADA standards, modification of left-turn phasing, and lengthening of left-turn storage bays.

Route 10 and Sorghum Mill Road, Kent County

Description: The project consists of channelizing the median at the intersection of SR 10 and Sorghum Mill Road to accommodate eastbound and westbound SR 10 left-turns. This improvement will accommodate westbound left-turns, the highest volume left-turn movement at the intersection, while separating left-turn movements at the intersection to reduce the potential for left-turn and angle accidents. Northbound left-turns will be diverted to the median opening to the east at Liberty Plaza where volumes are minimal and sight distance is adequate.

Cost: \$400,000

Justification: Identified under the Highway Safety Improvement Program as a safety priority.

Status: Environmental/permitting is clear. Design complete.

Rehoboth Beach Boardwalk Refurbishment Phase II and III

Description: Boardwalk Restoration from Henlopen Hotel to Rehoboth Avenue and from Laurel Street to Prospect Street as well as area adjacent to Rehoboth Avenue.

Cost: \$7.5 million

Justification: The current wooden boardwalk is becoming a safety issue. This benefits not only pedestrian accessibility but enhances tourism.

New Castle County Greenway Millcreek

Description: This project will complete a segment of looped recreational trails and will be a part of an overall cross-county greenway trail system near Mill Creek Road. This segment will start at the intersection of McKennans Church Road and Duncan Road traverse north through the Delcastle recreational area and terminate near the golf course.

Cost: \$1 million

Justification: Will encourage more people to choose off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities to get to destinations.

Status: Working with New Castle County.

New Castle County Greenway Industrial Track Phase I

Description: Construct a trail along an abandoned railroad corridor owned by the State of Delaware from SR 273 to just north of Boulden Blvd.

Cost: \$1.5 million

Justification: Will encourage more people to choose off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities to get to destinations.

Status: Working with New Castle County.

Lightship Overfalls Site Improvement, Lewes

Description: Work to construct a permanent berth for the historic Lightship Overfalls. The ship (LV118/WAL539), built in 1938, has been on the Canal in downtown Lewes, Delaware since 1973. She is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The ship is now in Norfolk, VA., having a new hull installed on the ship. Once the work is complete, the plan is to have the ship will return to Lewes. Prior to the ship leaving for VA., DelDOT's Transportation Enhancement (T.E.) program spent roughly \$300,000 to assist with the interior renovation of the ship. All the work was done by local volunteer historians. The plan is to return the ship back to its original location in a new berth, adjacent to the Lewes Canal Front Park.

Cost: \$400,000

Justification: This project would go a long way assisting with the economic revitalization of the local area by bringing tourists to the attraction, including the Lewes Canal Front Park, for the long haul. Tourists that visit the site also spend money in the surrounding area. As volunteers did much of the previous work, this investment will also bring about a sense of community pride.

Status: DelDOT is currently accepting public comments on this project through May 4, 2009, per Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) guidance.

For more on the ship and the Overfalls Maritime Museum Foundation go to www.overfalls.org.

Route 299 Park & Ride Improvements, Middletown

Description: Expansion of the park and ride located at the intersection of SR 299 and SR 1. Project also includes the relocation of the entrance to SR 299 to a new signalized intersection being constructed at Gloucester Drive.

Cost: \$1.4 million

Justification: Assists in expanding and providing better access for alternative transportation users.

Rt. 896 and Rt. 4 Park & Ride Improvements, Newark

Description: Retrofit curb ramps, sidewalks and other aspects of the facility to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Cost: \$200,000 of ARRA funding (entire project cost is approximately \$400,000).

Justification: This facility was built in the early 1980s before ADA requirements, and the upgrades will not only better serve the disabled, but also enhance safety for all users.

Dover Transit Center, first phase

Description: Build the first phase of a DART Dover Transit Center on five acres on Water Street between Queen and West streets. This work would include the internal loop road, shelters, parking lot and stormwater system.

Cost: \$5.7 million, to be obligated in the one-year timeframe.

Justification: Federal spending allocation restrictions prevent the full \$13.3 million from being funded. As such, DelDOT will move forward with the bus loop, parking areas and stormwater aspects, while making future accommodations for the addition of the buildings. Eventually, this site would replace the current minimal facility on 1.5 acres on Water Street, between Governors Ave. and State Street. The future facility could accommodate more buses, allowing for future expansion of the system if funding allows. The new facility will also be located on the rail line, allowing for possible use as a train station in the future if funding for such a capital project were available.

Status: This project would be built under a Design-Build scope, allowing the project to move forward faster than a regular bidding process. The Request for Qualifications (RFQ) – the first step in a Design-Build project – is expected to go out by the end of April.

I-95 Concrete Medians Replacement

Description: Some medians along I-95 need replacement.

Cost: \$1.2 million

Justification: Safety issue as the concrete on many of these medians is deteriorating.

Status: There should be no significant environmental/permitting issues.

Old Lancaster Pike (Hockessin) Streetscape/Drainage Project

Description: Improve street design and drainage along Old Lancaster Pike. The Streetscape Project for the Community Redevelopment Plan for the Village of Hockessin falls within the scope of a Transportation Enhancement (TE) project. The project includes streetscape improvements along Old Lancaster Pike from Valley Road to Erickson Drive. Improvements will include sidewalk repair/replacement, curb ramp upgrades, decorative street lighting, crosswalk improvements and minimal landscaping.

Cost: \$3.5 million.

Justification: This work would improve safety for motorists and pedestrians and make much-needed drainage improvements.

Centreville Streetscape/Traffic Calming

Description: This project on Rt. 52/Old Kennett Pike would replace current temporary traffic calming features with permanent ones, including continuous curb and sidewalk network, bulb-outs, crosswalk improvements and parking width and markings.

Cost: \$3.7 million.

Justification: This work would improve safety for motorists and pedestrians.

New Castle County Guardrail Upgrades

Description: Existing guardrails would be upgraded.

Cost: \$1 million.

Justification: A safety concern as many locations need replacement to meet current safety standards.

Rail Cars, New Castle County

Description: Allows DelDOT's Delaware Transit Corporation (DTC) to purchase 4 new Silverliner V rail cars from SEPTA, which will add capacity for SEPTA service between Philadelphia and Newark, DE. Delivery is scheduled for 2010.

Cost: \$8 million.

Justification: Purchase of the rail cars will support the rail improvements project currently in the CTP, and improve the frequency of trips along the Northeast Corridor.

Buses, Sussex County

Description: This project is part of a bus purchase and replacement program, which allocates new buses throughout the state. An investment of \$1.9 million will purchase buses for Sussex County that are needed to replace current buses with high mileage.

Cost: \$1.9 million.

Justification: Will allow DART to continue to provide reliable service to customers.

DART Mid-County Facility, New Castle County

Description: This project will construct six maintenance bays and parts storage for the maintenance of DART Fixed Route and Paratransit buses. The facility is at Rt. 72 and Rt. 1.

Cost: \$7.2 million.

Justification: This expands the current facility.

Status: Design is partially complete.

Rehabilitation of Epoxy Pavement Markings

Description: Several areas of roadways statewide would be rehabilitated.

Cost: \$2 million, to be completed if additional ARRA funding becomes available.

Justification: The high-visibility epoxy markings contribute to a safer road system in particular during adverse weather conditions.

Status: There are no environmental/permitting issues.

Route 404/Newton Road Railroad Crossing, Bridgeville

Description: Add gates and update cantilever lights and controller; replace pre-cast concrete surface. Railroad would do this work.

Cost: \$400,000, to be completed if additional ARRA funding becomes available.

Justification: A safety project.

ARRA contracts also have more reporting requirements for contractors and DeIDOT than a typical project. DeIDOT continues to work with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), but essentially there are monthly requirements to report status, spending and employment data. In order to keep contractors up to date with the reporting requirements while proposals are being advertised, DeIDOT has initiated a Web page to provide the most current information available for DeIDOT ARRA contract proposals, at <http://www.deldot.gov/information/business/arra/>.