

Michael F. Easley
Governor



State of North Carolina
Office of the Governor

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**GOV. EASLEY ANNOUNCES FULL 2-YEAR LIST OF 908 HIGHWAY AND BRIDGE
PROJECTS AS PART OF N.C. MOVING AHEAD! INITIATIVE**

RALEIGH – Gov. Mike Easley today rolled out the full 2-year list of 908 highway and bridge projects as part of his innovative \$700 million transportation and economic stimulus package he proposed earlier this year.

"These projects will not only bring a new level of safety and mobility to the state, they also will bring economic relief to thousands of families in need of jobs," Easley said. (See attached project list by highway division. The list also is available on the web at <http://www.ncdot.org>.)

"Projects will be undertaken in all 100 counties," he said. "These new transportation improvements will significantly strengthen our state's economic competitiveness and set the stage for even more economic development in the future.

"The great value of transportation jobs is that they cannot be exported," Easley said. "*Moving Ahead!* projects will draw upon the local workforce and help the people who matter the most – our families and neighbors. The projects announced today equate to a continuous wave of new jobs for the next two years."

In August, Easley signed into law the program to use \$700 million in Highway Trust Fund money for highway preservation, modernization and public transportation. He also announced the first round of 28 highway projects. The General Assembly approved the legislation, House Bill 48, in July.

More than 500 widening and resurfacing projects are targeted on such major highways as N.C. 43 in Pitt County; N.C. 55 in Sampson County; N.C. 96 in Franklin and Granville counties; N.C. 150 in Lincoln and Iredell counties; N.C. 251 in Buncombe County; N.C. 343 in Camden County; U.S. 64 in Davidson and Randolph counties; U.S. 158 in Guilford and Rockingham counties; U.S. 52 in Surry County; U.S. 401 in Hoke County; and U.S. 258 in Lenoir and Jones counties.

(more)

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The list includes hundreds of vital safety improvements along secondary roads such as widening narrow pavement, straightening curves, improving sight distances, drainage improvements and building turn lanes. Forty-four signal improvements are planned such as new closed loop systems along N.C. 58 in Carteret County, U.S. 17 in Pasquotank County and U.S. 70 in Burke County. Additionally, there are 189 bridge replacements across the state.

Easley also announced 23 highway projects in Cabarrus County for a total of \$14 million and another 23 projects in Rowan County for nearly \$11 million. "Extra emphasis was directed toward these counties to help offset some of the serious job losses and boost the local economies," he said.

NCDOT solicited candidate projects earlier in the year from local governments for consideration. To be selected, projects must fulfill vital safety and highway preservation needs, such as pavement rehabilitation, road widening and bridge replacements.

The agency plans to let \$100 million of these highway projects to contract by Dec. 30 and an additional \$170 million by March 2004. The \$70 million in public transportation projects will be announced at a later date. NCDOT will be working with the Minority Contractors Expansion Council and other outreach groups to ensure opportunities for bid participation.

According to The Road Information Program (or TRIP), 42,000 jobs are created by every \$1 billion spent in road construction, and every \$1 in highway spending has a \$5.70 impact on the economy. Based on these figures, *N.C. Moving Ahead!* will make a \$4 billion impact in North Carolina and will result in nearly 30,000 new jobs.

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