

NEWS RELEASE

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News Contact: Steve Swartz (785) 296-3585

Two suspended road projects back on track

Two major road expansion projects that were suspended in November due to funding uncertainties are back on track.

The Kansas Department of Transportation will open bids Feb. 4 for the \$58 million, K-61 expansion in Reno County and the \$54 million, U.S. 169 expansion in Montgomery County. They are among the final major projects of the 10-year Comprehensive Transportation Program (CTP).

“These are important projects that will make a difference. But because of funding uncertainties at both the federal and state levels, we needed some time to assess all of our projects and analyze numbers,” said KDOT Secretary Deb Miller.

“We decided that due to favorable prices right now, it is advantageous to the state to get these projects under contract quickly.”

KDOT analysts have determined that by withholding some of the suspended CTP preservation projects, such as pavement resurfacing, the two large projects can be built – even if an anticipated federal economic stimulus package fails to gain congressional approval. President-elect Obama has proposed billions of dollars worth of spending to create jobs, improve

infrastructure and boost the economy. He has stated he hopes to authorize a stimulus package shortly after he takes office.

“All indications are there will be an economic stimulus package,” said Secretary Miller. “We anticipate that once a bill is approved, prices will go up. And that’s another reason to get the K-61 and U.S. 169 projects under way as soon as possible.”

The 8.6-mile, K-61 project will expand the road from two to four lanes between Hutchinson and the McPherson County line. Two other K-61 projects that will continue the four-lanes another 14½ miles to the city of McPherson remain on hold but will be top priority if stimulus bill is passed. The two McPherson County projects total \$88.2 million.

The 5.5-mile, U.S. 169 project in Montgomery County will expand the road from two to four lanes from U.S. 166 at Coffeyville north to County Road 3000. Among the work to be done is construction of a new bridge and replacement of another.

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