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## *Ninewa Province ready to spend over \$6.6 million for infrastructure improvements*

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**Mosul, Iraq**—I-CERP is a new version of an old program.

The original Commander's Emergency Response Program was established by the coalition commander in 2003 with seized regime cash. Brigade combatant commanders were entrusted with CERP funds to respond to immediate humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people in their areas of responsibility. CERP coffers couldn't be used in conjunction with appropriated funds and were governed by strict parameters and control.

Since the inception of that nascent program, CERP money has repaired schools, jails and police stations; refurbished water and sewage treatment facilities; rebuilt bridges and roads; reenergized government and civic operations; and afforded untold thousands of displaced Iraqi people the means by which to return to their homes. Seized money well spent.

Conversely, a new initiative called the Iraq-Commander's Emergency Response Program is a voluntary financial arrangement between Iraqi provincial governments using their own government funds and asking the coalition forces to help them.

"The I-CERP program provides a good opportunity for coalition forces to work

with the local government to develop and execute projects that are needed now—not three years from now when the local budget process catches up," said Lt. Col. William Gatewood, the Gulf Region North district's engineer on the Ninewa Provincial Reconstruction Team.

The Gulf Region North district is in the pre-award stage now for 10 proposed projects from brigade combatant commanders and the PRT in the Ninewa Province. The Joint Contracting Command-Iraq will award the 10 contracts, ideally by the end of December.

- Two are water projects that are small dollar with huge sustaining benefit to the people of Tal'Arfar's Al-Gada and Al-Jazera neighborhoods.

- Eight are road projects—including Routes Santa Fe and Porsche in and around the city of Mosul.

The remaining six road projects are in the western part of the Ninewa Province. All are critical to the economic growth and will increase the flow of commerce into Mosul and the entire province. All support commercial, essential and emergency services from Iraq's second-largest city to its Syrian border.

Gatewood said the design of the road projects will be provided mainly by the local government and to their standards. "When questions arise concerning such

items as curb and median specifications, the Iraqi engineers will work with the US Army Corps of Engineers to develop an acceptable standard.”

Since some of the projects are essentially identical, GRN is considering “bundling” two or three projects together, allowing Iraqi construction contractors to bid on the bundle. One school of thought is this defeats the intent of I-CERP—to provide work for the small contractor. Another is that “bundling” is justified because the majority of the projects are located in Western Ninewa where skilled labor is limited. The bottom line is that either way, it gets Ninewa’s economy moving.

“I-CERP projects mainly deal with basic services,” Gatewood said. “With roads repaired and water systems functioning properly, business people can focus on running their businesses.”

He went on to say, “The local govern-

ment’s involvement in the I-CERP program has been very good. The Iraqis carefully evaluate each project to make sure it’s a prudent use of Iraqi money.”

Since the beginning of the Iraq Reconstruction Program in 2004, the Mosul Resident Office has had project and construction management for over 400 reconstruction projects in the Ninewa Province. Projects include health and education; electrical and oil; security and justice; public works and water; transportation; and military construction. These improvements total more than \$44 million from different funding sources, including CERP.

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