

**Vice President Biden Applauds Arizona for Meeting Recovery Act
Milestone Ahead of Schedule**
Arizona Obligated Half of Its Highway Funds on April 21

Washington, DC – **Vice President Joe Biden** and **Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood** today announced that transportation projects funded under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) are putting people to work and building a foundation for the country’s long-term economic strength.

As part of the Administration’s effort to infuse Recovery Act funds swiftly into the economy, states are required under ARRA to obligate 50 percent of their highway funds by June 29, 2009. Working in coordination with the U.S. Department of Transportation, all 55 U.S. states and territories successfully beat this deadline at least 10 days ahead of schedule.

Nationwide, to date, \$19 billion has been obligated to fund over 5,300 approved for highway and other transportation projects nationwide. Of those, 1,900 projects are already underway. Already in Arizona, the state has put to work **\$260.3 million in highway funds** – or **71.2 percent** -- of the funds required under the Act.

“Our number one priority with the Recovery Act is getting folks back to work – and there is no better way to do that in these early days than by putting shovels in the ground and jump-starting projects like these that create jobs and boost local communities,” said Vice President Biden. “By delivering on these projects ahead of schedule and under-budget, we have been able to do even more than we expected -- create more job opportunities more quickly, with more dollars left over to put toward more projects that put people back on the job.”

Across the country, many transportation projects funded by the Recovery Act are coming in under budget and ahead of schedule. Reports continue to show that contractor bids to build and repair transportation networks are coming in substantially below the original engineering estimates. In some cases, thanks to fierce competition for the work, bids are 10, 20 and even 30 percent lower than expected. That means states are able to stretch taxpayer dollars, completing additional projects and creating even more jobs.

As if today, Arizona’s largest ARRA-funded project is a pavement preservation project on I-10, east of Tucson. This \$7 million project is located in an economically distressed area and is fully ARRA funded. Arizona has seen significant cost-savings associated with contract awards falling well below engineers’ estimates

“Every state not only met the 120-day deadline, they beat it,” said Secretary LaHood. “This is a testament to the fact that we’re putting money out there quickly and helping to get the economy back on track.”

President Obama signed ARRA on February 17, 2009, and funding was made available on March 3. ARRA funding for highway projects may be used for restoration, repair,

construction, and other activities under the Surface Transportation Program. Each proposed project must be approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Governors must certify that proposed projects meet certain conditions and that the state will use ARRA funds in addition to, not in replacement of, state funding of transportation projects.

Priority is given to projects that are projected to be completed within three years, are located in economically distressed areas, or will maximize job creation and economic benefits.

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