



# INFORMATION RELEASE

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## **SOUTHERN SEGMENT OF NEW INTERSTATE OPENS TEXARKANA TO SHREVEPORT OFFICIALLY I-49 NOW**

**TEXARKANA, AR (11-10)** – Arkansas and Louisiana officials gathered at the state line today to dedicate completion of the final segment of a new Interstate connecting Texarkana, AR to Shreveport, LA. The Federal Highway Administration recently designated the entire section as Interstate 49, replacing what was Highway 549 in Arkansas. Approximately 200 existing Highway 549 signs will be replaced with I-49 signs beginning this week.

“We dedicate a lot of our Arkansas highway projects,” said Arkansas State Highway and Transportation (AHTD) Director Scott Bennett. “But it’s not every day that we open one of this magnitude.”

Interstate 49 is a congressionally-designated High Priority Corridor that will eventually connect Kansas City, MO to New Orleans, LA. In Kansas City, I-49 will connect with I-29 to create a 1,700-mile, uninterrupted Interstate from Winnipeg, Manitoba in Canada, through the heart of America to New Orleans. Once completed, I-49 will intersect nine east-west Interstates.

AR Rep. Mary P. “Prissy” Hickerson, of Texarkana, noted that Arkansas has invested \$436 million to construction the new roadway from the state line to Highway 71 north of I-30 near Texarkana.

Bennett added that a total of \$1.2 billion toward the I-49 corridor has either been completed or is under construction along the western Arkansas border between Louisiana and Missouri.

In a statement from Arkansas Governor Mike Beebe, “It gives me great pleasure to send greetings to all those gathered at the Arkansas-Louisiana state line for the ribbon-cutting and dedication ceremony to celebrate the completion of the final section of Interstate 49 between Shreveport and Texarkana. The work of this international coalition represents the future for the next generation.”

In addition to AHTD Director Bennett and Rep. Hickerson, Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal and Louisiana Department of Transportation Secretary Sherri LeBas were also part of the onsite festivities.

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