



INFORMATION RELEASE

Office of the Director

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AHTD WITHDRAWS PROJECTS FROM JULY BID OPENING

One project reinstated while another is saved from withdrawal through partnering agreement

LITTLE ROCK (6-24) – The Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD) has withdrawn six construction projects scheduled for consideration in its July 21, 2015 bid opening due to continuing uncertainty of Federal-aid reimbursements available from the Federal Highway Trust Fund.

The estimated value of projects withdrawn from the July bid opening is more than \$55 million. An attached list of projects provides additional details. One project previously withdrawn from an earlier bid opening has been reinstated for the July bid opening. This brings the total number of projects withdrawn from the 2015 bid openings to 75. The estimated construction value of these withdrawn projects is \$335 million.

The reinstated project is a High Friction Safety Treatment (HFST) application to various Interstate off-ramps throughout the state. The application uses aggregates that are both polish- and wear-resistant and develops channels to prevent water buildup on wet surfaces. Maintaining the appropriate amount of pavement friction is critical in locations where drivers may brake excessively, such as when going around curves or approaching an intersection. An attached map illustrates the location of these ramps to receive the HFST.

“Delaying this project any further would mean that this temperature-sensitive work could not be completed this year,” said AHTD Director Scott Bennett. “Safety continues to be our top priority, and we’ll tighten our belts even more in order to make this happen. This is a relatively small project, but it will have a big impact on safety.”

Among the projects included in the July bid opening is an improvement project in Jonesboro at the intersection of State Highway 351 and Aggie Road. This project was not withdrawn from the July bid opening because the city will provide up-front funding to ensure payments will be made for work performed by the contractor in the event of reduced or delayed Federal reimbursements. The estimated construction value of the project is between \$1 million and \$2 million.

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“Our hats are off to the city of Jonesboro for stepping up with a solution to a problem,” Bennett stated. “Their willingness to provide up-front funding will allow a project to proceed that would otherwise have been withdrawn from the July bid opening.”

Since December 2014, AHTD has been conducting an evaluation of scheduled Federally-funded projects prior to each bid opening to ensure sufficient State funds are available to fulfill commitments during anticipated reductions or delays in Federal reimbursements. Highway construction projects in Arkansas are initially paid with State funds, and then the State seeks reimbursement from the Federal Highway Trust Fund for the Federal portion of those payments. Without action from Congress, reimbursements from the Federal Highway Trust Fund are expected to be curtailed at the end of July.

“This method of partnering with cities like Jonesboro enables projects to move forward while ensuring our cash balance isn’t adversely affected,” added Bennett. “All over the country, States are finding innovative ways to make up for anticipated losses and delays in Federal-aid. Our hope is that Congress will complete their work on a long-term solution very soon so this trend doesn’t continue and we can begin to reinstate the projects that have been withdrawn.”

Nation at a Crossroads

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) has created a web-based infographic as part of a campaign that calls on Congress to “think big” and focus on long-term highway infrastructure needs rather than short-term fixes which “kick the can down the road” and will only result in this becoming a recurring issue. States, planners, and engineers cannot plan needed infrastructure projects without committed and stable funding.

The “Nation at a Crossroads” campaign urges policymakers to consider what is achievable in a long-term, sustainable source of funding to keep America on the right path. This investment will grow our economy, create and sustain jobs, and improve our mobility and quality of life.

The campaign site also features a “state impact” section that provides state-level information showing how Federal funding affects transportation investment. At risk in Arkansas includes \$490 million in Federal highway funding, \$32 million in Federal transit funding, an estimated 11,000 jobs, and 220 projects.

The site is available at <http://invest.transportation.org>.

Projects Withdrawn from the July 2015 Bid Opening

County	Route	Project Name	AHTD Job Number
Faulkner	40	Conway South Interchange-Hwy. 365 (Base & Surf.) (S)	080396
Garland	- - -	Stokes Creek Str. & Apprs. (Hot Springs) (S)	061391
Pulaski	367	Union Pacific RR Overpass (Arch St.) (LR) (S)	060395
Union	167	El Dorado-Hwy. 335 (S)	070280
Union	167	Hwy. 335-Ouachita River (S)	070281
Various	Various	Shoulder Rumble Strips/Stripes (Sel. Secs.) (Dists. 1, 5, 6, 10) (S)	012228

