

MILEPOST

GEORGIA

Spring 2009

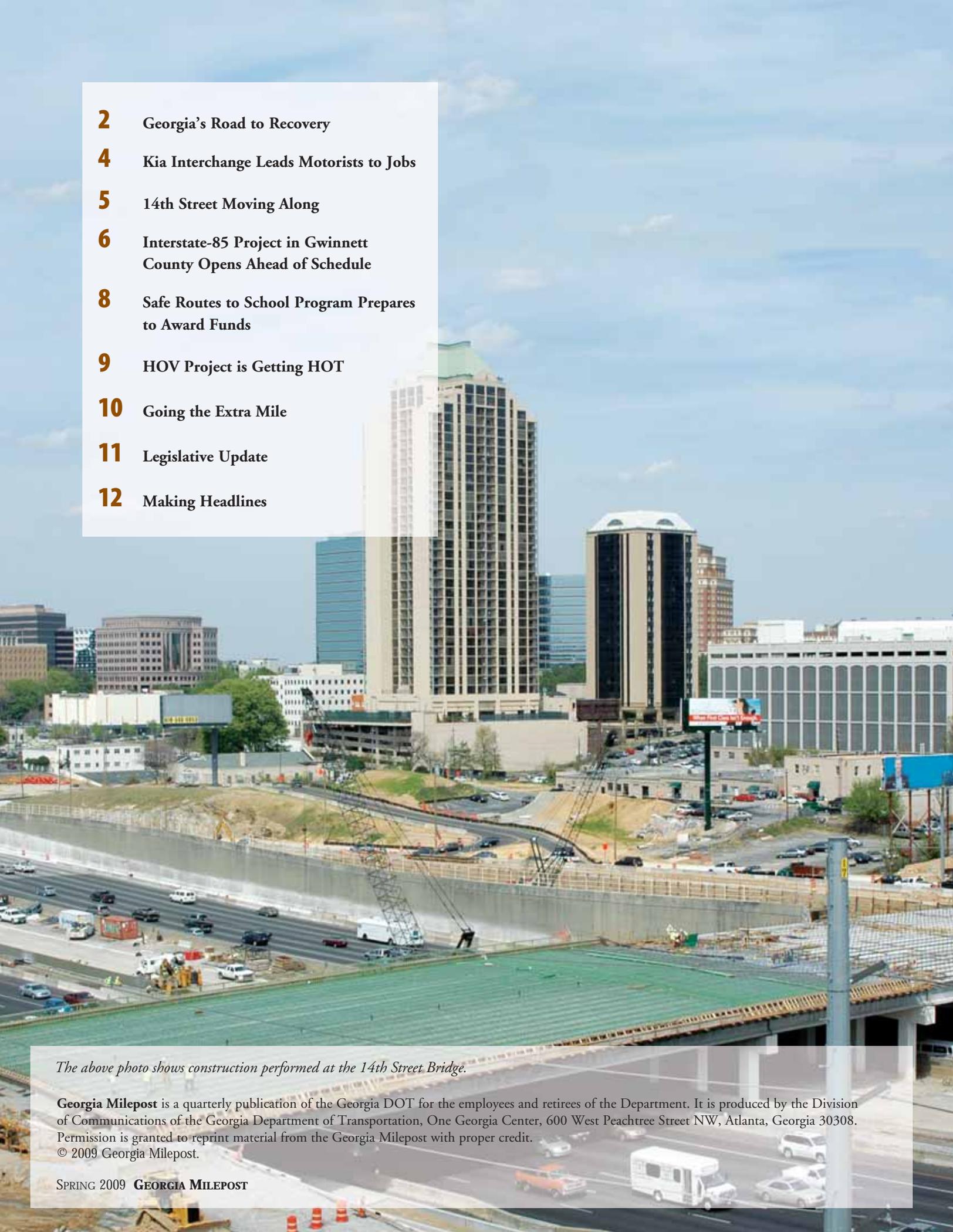
14th Street Moving Along

Page 5

Kia Interchange Leads Motorists to Jobs

Page 4



- 
- 2** Georgia's Road to Recovery
 - 4** Kia Interchange Leads Motorists to Jobs
 - 5** 14th Street Moving Along
 - 6** Interstate-85 Project in Gwinnett County Opens Ahead of Schedule
 - 8** Safe Routes to School Program Prepares to Award Funds
 - 9** HOV Project is Getting HOT
 - 10** Going the Extra Mile
 - 11** Legislative Update
 - 12** Making Headlines

The above photo shows construction performed at the 14th Street Bridge.

Georgia Milepost is a quarterly publication of the Georgia DOT for the employees and retirees of the Department. It is produced by the Division of Communications of the Georgia Department of Transportation, One Georgia Center, 600 West Peachtree Street NW, Atlanta, Georgia 30308. Permission is granted to reprint material from the Georgia Milepost with proper credit.
© 2009 Georgia Milepost.

Commissioner's Column

Achieving Our Goals and Getting the Job Done



The Georgia Department of Transportation has undergone many changes in the past year, the most recent being at the upper management level. Several long time GDOT employees have been promoted to new positions, and some new faces also have arrived. Read more about our leadership in this issue of Milepost. GDOT, like other state agencies, also has faced many challenges. But our employees continue to forge ahead, ready to work for Georgia. Our mission

continues to be the focus of the Department's attention, and when confronted with these challenges, we respond. March brought major winter weather to north Georgia. Statewide, GDOT employees came together to clear the roads and make them safe again. See the details of our teamwork in this issue.

Equally important, the Department continues to focus on our goals, including improving project delivery and customer service. Read about several important projects that were completed before the deadline or are currently ahead of schedule. We continue to support or deliver programs that improve safety and the quality of life for all Georgians. Additionally, read about a pending project that is designed to reduce congestion along Interstate-85, and another that helps children get to school safely.

Lastly, GDOT will continue to reach out to assist local agencies as we partner with federal and state officials to put our citizens back to work on transportation infrastructure and other projects. The economic stimulus process is detailed in these pages for your review.

Enjoy this issue of Milepost, and please feel free to contact us with your comments and concerns.

Gerald Ross, P.E.
Commissioner

Staff

DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS CREATIVE AND DESIGN SERVICES

Carla Murphy

Editor

Cedric Mohr

Marketing & Design Manager

Laurie Scott

Information Design Specialist

Karlene Barron

Division Director

Ericka Davis

*Government &
Community Relations*

David Spear

Press Secretary

Monica Luck

Marketing & Promotions Specialist

Administration

Gerald Ross, P.E.

Commissioner

Steve Henry

Chief Operating Officer

Gerald Ross, P.E.

Chief Engineer

Kate Pfirman

Treasurer

District Communications

Teri Pope — District One

Cissy McNure — District Two

Kimberly Larson — District Three

Craig Solomon — District Four

Mohamed Arafa — District Six

Mark McKinnon — District Seven

Total Georgia ARRA Spending

Highway.....	\$932 Million
Transit.....	\$144 Million
Aviation.....	\$9.9 Million

When ARRA was signed into law, the final federal regulations honed GDOT's efforts to determine what projects were eligible for the stimulus funding. The requirements included:

- Project status (must be "ready to go" and authorized for letting no later than June 30 or December 30, 2009)
- Completion within 3 years (and project expenses completed by February 17, 2012)
- Working within the state's federally-designated Economically Distressed Areas (EDAs)
- Expeditious project delivery
- Maximum job creation and economic benefit
- Distributed across the state
- High number of individual contracts
- Included or amended into state transportation improvement plans (STIP/TIP)
- Meet all standard federal eligibility requirements
- Meet federal functional classification requirements
- Environmental clearances in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- Right-of-Way acquisition and certification in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisitions Policy Act

Georgia's Road to Recovery

By Lillian Jackson



Ever since the announcement of a federal economic stimulus package began spreading across the country, GDOT began planning for the important role it would play in its implementation. Even before the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) was signed into law this winter, the State Transportation Board solicited local governments for their “shovel-ready” stimulus project “wish lists.” Some very general federal guidelines were known and conveyed to our local government partners in December 2008, but the solicitation served to get local officials thinking about projects across the state that could go to construction in short order, as the federal guidelines mandated.

GDOT senior staff began holding weekly team meetings with representatives from several partner agencies, including the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA), and others who would play a collaborative role in the state's transportation stimulus projects. During these meetings, it was determined how Georgia's stimulus projects would be categorized, what percentage of funding would go to each category, and what quantitative measurements would be used to prioritize projects. For example, the inter-agency team agreed to present for Board approval a maintenance project category (resurfacing, paving, etc.) that would be allocated an estimated 50 percent of the funding. The Board also was advised that each maintenance project would be scored and prioritized based on Pavement Condition Evaluation System (PACES) ratings, existing and future traffic counts, and other quantifiable scores.

With a list of unfunded projects that totaled \$1.9 million, and an additional \$600,000 in local project submissions, the inter-agency stimulus team needed to apply the strict federal rules and an objective prioritization process to develop a \$787 million highway and bridge stimulus program.

Further, the ARRA mandated that 50 percent of Georgia's appropriation be obligated by June 2009 – a minimum of \$326 million worth of projects – for Phase One.

“Our next big step is to work toward authorization of Phase Two projects for letting no later than December 30.”

Meg Pirkle

On March 19, the State Transportation Board approved a list of 135 projects valued at \$512 million for GDOT's Phase One. As required by law, Governor Sonny Perdue reviewed the project list and certified that the projects were in compliance with the law and suitable for jobs-creation in all areas of the state.

GDOT's first stimulus projects were let in April – nine projects totaling an estimated \$25 million. May and June lettings will get the remaining Phase One projects a step closer to construction and creating jobs throughout Georgia. These projects will be carefully tracked and monitored for progress toward completion within three years, for accurate cost accounting, and for the number of jobs actually created, as the law requires.

Meg Pirkle, assistant to Chief Engineer & Commissioner Gerald Ross and other

senior staff have provided stimulus project information and process updates to the Board, members of the Georgia General Assembly, the state House and Senate Transportation committees, the boards of our transportation partners, county commissions, and other interested groups.

“Our next big step is to work toward authorization of Phase Two projects for letting no later than December 30,” Pirkle said. “We will also publicize the selection of transit and aviation projects, develop and submit rail, airport and surface transportation projects to compete for ARRA discretionary funds, and monitor and report monthly on each project's expenditures and progress toward completion by February 2012.”

GDOT also launched its stimulus Web site, www.dot.ga.gov/gastimulus, to ensure transparent, speedy access to our project information. Information on the site is designed to help our local government partners, MPOs, and the general public understand the ARRA federal requirements and GDOT's project selection process.

The law is also very clear on the issue of transparency and accountability for each state's use of these stimulus funds. The Web site is a key part of our stimulus public information and public input effort. Visitors to the site can submit a comment or question for response if desired.

The Department is striving for successful implementation of the transportation stimulus program and putting Georgians on the road to economic recovery as quickly as possible. Motorists in Georgia should see new stimulus work zone sites beginning this summer.

Kia Interchange Leads Motorists to Jobs

Project completed ahead of schedule

By Crystal Paulk-Buchanan

During these tough economic times, a new Interstate-85 interchange is proving its worth to thousands of Georgians seeking employment. Some potential hires arrived for interviews this fall at Kia Motors Manufacturing of Georgia and several related automobile supply companies, even as Georgia Department of Transportation crews were pulling barrels from the road.

The new interchange in Troup County near the city of West Point opened in December 2008, more than 30 days ahead of a tight 18-month construction deadline. It is the largest design-build construction project initiated to-date by GDOT. Design-build focuses on combining design and construction activities in order to expedite the traditional design-bid-build process.

“On behalf of Kia Motors Manufacturing Georgia, I would like to extend our sincere gratitude and appreciation for the hard work it took to arrive at this point, on time and accident-free.”

Randy Jackson, Director of Human Resources at Kia

Opening the interchange and associated Kia Boulevard and Kia Parkway early made it much easier for new and potential employees to access the training center and the production facility, said Randy Jackson, director of human resources at Kia. “On behalf of Kia Motors Manufacturing Georgia, I would like to extend our sincere gratitude and appreciation for the hard work it took to arrive at this point, on time and accident-free,” Jackson said.

With more than 6,000 new jobs expected to be generated through the Kia plant and related automotive suppliers, the economic impact of the overall project will be enormous, according to West Point Mayor Drew Ferguson, IV. “We are greatly appreciative of the vision of the Governor and the role the Georgia Department of Transportation has played in getting the project underway and finished so quickly,” Ferguson said. “The quality of work has been outstanding.”

In addition to the interchange, the \$80.7 million project includes approximately five miles of new frontage and access roads, two new bridges, improvements to connecting road-



Construction work is performed at the Kia road site in Troup County.

ways and new traffic signals at various locations. The project was singled out by the U.S. Department of Transportation to receive \$1 million in grant funding through the Highways for LIFE program which focuses on improving highway construction projects through the application of innovative approaches to design and construction. This program also made it possible for the entire project to be fully-funded by the federal government, saving the state approximately \$16 million in traditionally required matching funds.





14th Street Moving Along

By Crystal Paulk-Buchanan

An interstate reconstruction project in Midtown Atlanta is entering its final year, with motorists expected to see significant improvements over the next six months.

The \$88.5 million project to rebuild the 14th Street bridge with turn lanes and wider sidewalks will also add two new interstate ramps to the Downtown Connector. Although the full project is not scheduled to be completed until spring 2010, at least two key segments should open to motorists this year.

The Georgia Department of Transportation anticipates the new ramp from Interstate-75/85 to 10th Street will open in late spring, as well as sections of the adjacent Techwood Drive. Workers finished placing the remaining bridge beams over the northbound side of the Downtown Connector in mid-March, expecting the bridge to open by Christmas 2009. The second ramp from I-75/85 to 17th Street will open soon after the bridge.

With most utilities relocated, crews are tearing out and rebuilding 14th Street on both sides of the bridge, with most of the work expected to be completed by end of summer. Additionally, the northbound side of I-75/85 between 10th Street and the Brookwood Split will be repaved beginning early summer.

"There is a huge amount of work to be accomplished in a very small area," said Metro Atlanta Construction Engineer Mickey McGee. "We've been fortunate with the dry weather and everything is running very smoothly. If this keeps up, we should have some good news for folks come fall."

The above photo shows the construction crew working at the 14th Street Bridge.



The new flyover bridges are shown on Interstate-85 and State Route 316.

Photo Courtesy of Aerial Innovations of GA, Inc.

Interstate-85 Project in Gwinnett County Opens Ahead of Schedule

By Teri Pope

Motorists traveling north of Atlanta on Interstate-85 have a more efficient and safer commute following the early completion of an interchange reconstruction project in Gwinnett County.

More than two months ahead of schedule, GDOT crews pulled the last orange barrels from I-85 and State Route 316 in October. The \$155 million project added 14 miles of High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes to I-85 and built three miles of HOV lanes on SR 316 in October.

The interchange reconstruction included two new flyover bridges. One bridge carries SR 316 westbound vehicles to I-85 south. The second flyover bridge is half a mile long and carries SR 316 west traffic directly to Pleasant Hill Road avoiding the interstate completely. It eliminates traffic attempting to cross five lanes to reach the Pleasant Hill Road exit.

Additionally the existing Collector Distributor (CD) system from Old Peachtree Road to Boggs Road was extended south to include SR 316 and Pleasant Hill Road, creating the longest CD system in Georgia, just over five miles long.

Every stage of the project opened before the internal project schedule. Clearing began January 2006 and the final segment of HOV lane opened October 22, 2008, more than two months ahead of the December 31, 2008 completion date.

“The early completion of this major project underscores our commitment to improving project delivery.”

Commissioner Gerald Ross, P.E.

Each of the flyover bridges also opened two months ahead of schedule.

“The early completion of this project underscores our commitment to improving project delivery,” said Commissioner Gerald Ross. “I am confident that the success of this project was based on everyone’s cooperative efforts in getting to the end. At the end of the day, it is the cooperation of all of those involved with the project that makes it a success.”

While the drought played a significant role in the fast moving project schedule, crews also worked three shifts, seven days a week, for the first year of the project. Contractors and the GDOT construction team made early completion their primary focus. For example: when the initial strength test for a newly poured concrete support structure for a bridge was low, the structure was torn down instead of waiting for it to cure and possibly increase in strength. New concrete was poured within two days and construction moved forward.

The project significantly improved mobility in the area. Speeds within the interchange increased dramatically, according to studies conducted through the Transportation Management Center. Additionally, rush hour conditions end earlier in the evening. Prior to the project, rush hour ended as late as 7:15 p.m., but now it ends by 6:15 p.m.

Businesses in the Gwinnett Place Community Improvement District (CID) say they have reaped the benefits of the I-85 at SR 316 reconstruction and HOV extension project. Joe Allen, Executive Director with the CID explains, “With enhanced Interstate access and improved traffic flow to and from Pleasant Hill Road. This GDOT project, coupled with the CID’s traffic signal optimization project for the area, has dramatically improved commute times into and around the greater Gwinnett Place area. Throughout the construction period, GDOT staff worked with the CID to provide signage and other directional assistance and succeeded in minimizing negative impact to the area. Building upon this partnership with GDOT, the CID has recently installed enhanced landscaping to a portion of the collector-distributor lanes installed as a result of the project near Pleasant Hill Road.”



IMPROVED MOBILITY

GDOT Transportation Management Center staff studied speeds along I-85 north before and after the project. Upon completion of the restructured interchange and expanded HOV lanes they found significant operational improvements.

I-85 north at Steve Reynolds Boulevard – First interchange south of Pleasant Hill Road

- Noon to 8 p.m. speed 49.9 mph to 60 mph for a 21 percent increase
- 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. speed 34.3 mph to 56 mph for a 64 percent increase
- Lowest 15-minute speed of the day was 27.1 mph, which improved to 51.8 mph for a 24.7 percent increase

I-85 north at Beaver Run Road – Second interchange south of Pleasant Hill Road

- Noon to 8 p.m. speed 53.8 mph to 59.8 mph for an 11 percent increase
- 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. speed 41.3 mph to 56.2 mph for a 36 percent increase
- Lowest 15 min speed of the day was 32.4 mph improved to 51.8 mph for a 19.4 mph increase

I-85 north at Jimmy Carter Boulevard – Third interchange south of project – 6 miles south of Pleasant Hill Road

- Noon to 8 p.m. speed 52.2 mph to 56.3 mph for an 8 percent increase
- 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. speed 38.7 mph to 50.4 mph for a 30 percent increase
- Lowest 15 min speed of the day was 32.3 mph improved to 41.7 mph for a 9.4 percent increase

Prior to the project, speeds did not recover to 60 mph until 6:45 p.m. to 7:15 p.m. Following the project speeds recover to 60 mph between 5:45 p.m. and 6:15 p.m.

Safe Routes to School Program Prepares to Award Funds



Georgia DOT's Safe Routes to School Program held its first call for infrastructure projects this fall, paving the way for more students to bike and walk to schools across the state. The Department received 65 infrastructure applications totaling \$23 million in requests and will be able to award \$5 to \$8 million during this funding cycle. Applications are currently being reviewed and selections will be announced this spring.

GDOT selected Kimley-Horn as the consulting firm to design, implement and expedite all Infrastructure projects awarded SRTS funding. Kimley-Horn will provide the preliminary engineering for these projects and prepare projects for letting. GDOT will coordinate with the local transportation or public works departments and school districts on the project designs.

The Non-Infrastructure component of the program will be implemented through Georgia's SRTS Resource Center. Like the Infrastructure component, a firm has been selected to administer various aspects of the Non-Infrastructure component.

GDOT is currently negotiating a contract with the selected firm to establish and maintain this Resource Center. Any K-8 school in Georgia will be able to enroll in the Resource Center and receive Non-Infrastructure SRTS services at no cost. The Center will assist schools with all education, encouragement, enforcement, evalu-

ation, planning and other non-construction related activities, such as bike or pedestrian safety training.

The concept of Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is an international movement that began in the 1970's in Denmark and quickly spread to the United States in the 1990s. It is now a worldwide phenomenon.



Students at Morris Brandon Elementary in Atlanta celebrate walking and biking to school.

Georgia's SRTS program was established in 2005. The national program is administered by the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Office of Safety. Georgia's program is managed by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT). The program's objectives are to:

- Promote walking/biking as a safe and more appealing transportation alternative.
- Encourage and enable children to more safely walk and bicycle to school.
- Promote healthy and active lifestyles at an early age.

- Implement projects and activities that will improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution in the vicinity of schools.

SRTS consists of two components (Infrastructure & Non-Infrastructure) and 5Es (Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, and

Evaluation), which help guide the program's activities.

Under the Infrastructure component, the SRTS program aims to fund bike/pedestrian-related projects such as building or improving sidewalks, crosswalks, and traffic diversions or establishing bicycle and pedestrian (bike/ped) facilities. However, projects typically not eligible for SRTS funding include school bus or bus stop related improvements.

FHWA provides funding to all state DOTs to implement eligible Infrastructure

projects and Non-Infrastructure programs such as bicycle and pedestrian safety workshops. The program provides funding at 100 percent, requiring no local match.

Since 2005, approximately \$612 million has been appropriated nationwide for SRTS programs, of which roughly \$17 million was appropriated to Georgia.

For more information about the Georgia SRTS Program, please visit www.dot.ga.gov/localgovernment/FundingPrograms/SRTS.



Motorists travel on HOT lanes in Minnesota, which converted its HOV lanes in 2005.

Photo Courtesy of the Minnesota Department of Transportation

HOV Project Is Getting **HOT**

By Monica Luck

In November 2008, Governor Sonny Perdue and then-U.S. Transportation Secretary Mary Peters announced a federal grant of \$110 million to Georgia through the USDOT Congestion Reduction Demonstration Program. These funds will be matched with \$37 million in state and local funds to implement Phase I of an integrated system of High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes, enhanced transit service and innovative technologies. Phase I is expected to demonstrate this multimodal congestion reduction strategy in the I-85 corridor from Chamblee-Tucker Road in DeKalb County to Old Peachtree Road in Gwinnett County.

HOT lanes will allow qualified vehicles (buses, vanpools, eligible carpools, motorcycles, alternative fuel vehicles, and emergency vehicles) to ride in the High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes for free, while other vehicles would enter for a fee. The fee would change based on the traffic volume in the HOT lane, in order to keep the lanes free-flowing for those who use it. The changing fee (a.k.a. dynamic pricing) has the potential to provide new transportation options and quality of life improvements for commuters within a short time frame, especially compared to the time it would take to build new lanes.

The Interstate-85 corridor was chosen due to its high congestion levels during peak traffic periods and the high usage of its HOV lane. With average daily trips

(ADTs) measuring between 9,000 and 18,000 vehicles per day, the HOV lane is near capacity. The objective of installing the tolling system is to reduce the traffic and make the HOT lane more free-flowing during peak traffic periods.

While no strategy can be expected to eliminate congestion completely, HOT lanes have the potential to provide a variety of benefits to both motorist and transit users. These benefits include:

- **Travel Time Reliability** – traffic volumes in HOT lanes are assessed to ensure consistent and reliable travel times, particularly during peak travel periods. The USDOT's performance standard for HOT lanes states that vehicles should maintain average speeds of 45 mph at least 90 percent of the time.
- **Commuter Choice** – In congested corridors with HOV facilities and transit service, HOT lanes provide previously ineligible solo motorists with the choice of paying for a free flowing, dependable, and faster trip, or continuing to use the general purpose lanes. Prices displayed on variable message signs provide potential users with the pricing information they need for their decision. Data from other HOT lane projects suggests that solo drivers use the lane on an as-needed basis, and value the HOT lane option

for activities such as getting to an important meeting on time, picking up a child from daycare, or attending a sporting event.

- **Transit Enhancements** – Since buses have free access to the HOT lane, transit operators and users can depend on reliable trip times for their commute. Moreover, other HOT lane projects report that travel times for transit remained the same or even decreased with the introduction of HOT lanes. Finally, significant transit investments are also proposed:
 - 36 new commuter coach buses supporting seven routes serving the I-85 corridor
 - 2 new park and ride facilities at Hamilton Mill and Cedars roads with 1,900 more park and ride spaces

These transit enhancements greatly increase convenience, level of service and reliability for transit connections to Midtown, Downtown and the Lindbergh MARTA station.

Informational sessions were held in Gwinnett and DeKalb counties to inform and educate the public about this new approach to congestion reduction and to obtain feedback and input. For more details about the I-85 HOT Lanes Project, please see www.dot.ga.gov/informationcenter/activeprojects/Interstates/I85hotlanes/pages/default.aspx



Going the Extra Mile

GDOT Teams Up To Clear Roads and Interstates After Snow Storm

By Carla Murphy

An early March storm that blew through Georgia left several inches of snow, but few headaches for motorists, thanks in large part to the work of the Georgia Department of Transportation.

More than 400 GDOT employees - many of them on 12-hour shifts - worked to ensure that Georgia roadways were safe for travel following the storm. Crews spreading salt and rock along the interstate and state routes were deployed throughout Georgia, with employees from districts not impacted by the storm joining others to assist in clearing roadways.

"This was truly a team effort, where people left their homes within minutes or an hour of being called to go out and clear roads," said Acting Chief Operating Officer Steve Henry. "From the moment we initiated our Emergency Operations Plan on Sunday, we had people ready to go to work."

Crews used some 3,750 tons of salt and 7,500 tons of rock on roadways; and employees deployed some 285 pieces of equipment to clear and prepare roadways for safer travel, garnering praise from Board members and others.

"The emergency plan worked very well and was an example of really good management," said State Transportation Board Chairman Bill Kuhlke. "Staff did an excellent job all around." The cost of the storm for GDOT did not result in increased expenditures, according to Henry, as staff worked 12-hour shifts without exceeding a 40-hour work week. The cost for labor



Photo courtesy of the Athens Banner-Herald

Staff & Equipment

Number of staff: 485
 Number of equipment: 285
 Tons of salt:..... 3,750
 Tons of rock: 7,500

Costs

Labor \$472,575
 Equipment..... \$393,834
 Material \$119,534
 Total \$985,943

during the storm was \$472,575. The total cost was \$985,943, including labor, equipment and material.

"I can't say enough about the performance of our team, which included the Commissioner who came to the Transportation Management Center (TMC) to get a sense of the work our staff was doing," said Henry. "Things went well; and everyone should be proud."

General Assembly Approves Legislation Impacting Department

Senate bills create new Planning Division and Georgia Aviation Authority

The Georgia General Assembly adjourned the 2009 session with two key legislative items impacting Georgia DOT receiving approval – one which creates a new planning division and another which establishes a new aviation authority.

Senate Bill 200 or the “governance bill” was approved by state legislators on the final day of the legislative session. Additionally, Senate Bill 85, which essentially transfers state air transportation responsibilities from GDOT to the new Authority, also was passed in the waning hours of the session.

“Over the course of the next few weeks, we will examine the implications of these key pieces of legislation to determine their full impact,” says Commissioner Gerald Ross. “We will work with our Board, partners and legislators to make certain we fulfill the intent of the legislation.”

The bills were passed April 3. *Coming in the next issue of Milepost: A review of all transportation-related legislation from the 2009 legislative session.*



Gerald Ross Named Interim Commissioner

The State Transportation Board in February named Gerald Ross Interim Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Transportation while a national search to fill the position is conducted. With his appointment, Ross becomes the first African American to serve as Commissioner of GDOT in its 94-year history.

In addition to leading the 5,400-employee agency, Ross also serves as Chief Engineer, where he is responsible for the divisions of Planning and Transportation Data; Pre-construction; Construction and Operations.

Ross is no stranger to DOT employees, as he has spent his entire career at GDOT. After graduating with a degree in Civil Engineering from Tennessee Tech University, he began his career at the Department as a Junior Engineer in the Office of Traffic Operations. Ross left the Office of Traffic Operations in 1986 to accept a position in the Office of Urban Design as a Design Engineer II. He was promoted to Assistant State Urban Engineer in 1998. After a total of 13 years in the Office of Urban Design, he accepted the position of Assistant to the Chief Engineer in 1999.

In March 2002, Ross was named State Road and Airport Design Engineer. In that capacity, he designed highway project improvements in all areas of the state of Georgia. Three years later, Ross was appointed Division Director of Planning, Data and Intermodal Development in January 2005. On September 1, 2007, he was appointed



Chief Engineer, becoming the first and only African-American Chief Engineer in the country.

Some of the major projects Ross has led over his career with the Department are: Interstate-75/Interstate-95/Interstate-85 rural interstates (statewide); Kennedy Interchange in Cobb County; Interstate-285 (top end 5th lane); Lithonia Industrial Boulevard and Interstate-20 in DeKalb County; South Fulton Parkway; the I-85/SR 316 interchange in Gwinnett County; and the Harry S. Truman Parkway in Chatham County.

Transportation Board Appoints Pfirman GDOT Treasurer



Kate Pfirman has been appointed by the State Transportation Board to serve as Treasurer for the Georgia Department of Transportation. She effectively assumed her duties in February.

Before joining the GDOT staff, Pfirman held critical financial positions in state government for the past 13 years, most recently as the Chief Administrative

Officer of the Georgia Technology Authority (GTA). Additionally, she was GTA's Deputy Senior Finance Officer; a Division Director in the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget; and served as Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Human Resources, where she was responsible for administering that Department's \$2 billion budget.

As Treasurer, Pfirman manages all financial matters for the Department and is responsible for acquiring and accounting for all funds the Department is entitled to receive and developing policies for administering funds. She oversees the offices of Innovative Finance, General Accounting, Financial Management and General Support.

Henry Named Acting Chief Operating Officer



Stephen Henry has been named Acting Chief Operating Officer, replacing Kevin Clark.

As COO, Henry will be responsible for the overall operations of the Department and will oversee the direction and activities of executive level staff.

A veteran of the Department, Henry has held various positions since joining

GDOT in 1979. Over his 30-year career, he has served as Director of Operations, Director of Field Services, District 7 District Engineer, State Maintenance Engineer, and in other positions in the Maintenance and Construction offices.

Thomas Appointed Director of Field Services



Mike Thomas, former Director of Transportation Planning and Transportation Data, has been appointed Director of Field Services.

In his current position, Thomas oversees operation and maintenance of the transportation system in each of GDOT's seven districts. He also manages the Office of State Aid and Office of

Equipment Management.

Thomas has spent 25 years with the Department, having worked in various capacities in the District Office and at the General Office. He began his career at GDOT as a Project Manager in 1983, and by 1987 had worked his way to Area Engineer for four counties in Southeast Georgia (Baxley). In 1991, he was promoted to District Construction Engineer, where he was responsible for 28 counties in Eastern Middle Georgia (Tennille). Three years later, he became District Maintenance Engineer and in 1997, District Engineer, where he was responsible for planning, organizing and directing activities of the district.

Thomas is a second-generation GDOT employee. His father retired as a Resident Engineer in 1981. He attended Middle Georgia College and is a graduate of the Georgia Institute of Technology.

Poole Serves as Acting Director of Operations



Commissioner Gerald Ross recently tapped longtime GDOT employee **Bryant Poole** to serve as Acting Director of Operations. Since 2005, Poole was District Engineer for District 7, covering metro Atlanta.

An employee with GDOT for almost 25 years, Poole has served in various capacities with the agency. He began his career

in Construction in May 1984 as an Engineer Trainee in districts 3 and 7. He later was promoted to Area Engineer in Valdosta for District 4; to Maintenance Engineer in District 3; to Assistant State Maintenance Engineer; and then to State Maintenance Engineer.

Poole is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, where he received a degree in Civil Engineering.

Stevens Becomes New Human Resources Director



Robin Stevens recently joined the Department as the new Director of Human Resources.

With more than 23 years of experience in human resources, Stevens has a broad range of professional expertise in various human resources functions, including employment law, recruitment and retention, organizational development, employee relations and training. She has spent more than half of her career in a high-level HR leadership role.

Stevens was most recently Director of Human Resources with Equifax, where she served in a Business Partner Role assisting three divisions of their domestic sales force. Prior to her work at Equifax, Robin spent 12 years as Director of Human Resources at AIG, where she was responsible for supporting 1,000 employees in seven states.

In addition to her corporate experience, Stevens has also spent years working in state government. While employed with the State of Georgia Merit System, she gained considerable experience in compensation and benefits. She supervised the team that implemented the Hay system classification and compensation plan, and successfully defended it before the State Review Panel.

Barron Serves as Acting Director of Communications



Karlene Barron has been tapped to serve as Acting Director of the Division of Communications.

Barron is the former Deputy Director of the Division of Communications and a longtime employee of the Department. In her new role, she will serve as the chief communications, public affairs and public outreach strategist for Georgia

DOT. In addition, she will advise and support the Commissioner and his senior staff on all communications matters. She also will be responsible for developing communications goals and measurable outcomes for the Division.

Barron, who was named Communications Administrator in 2007, has more than 16 years experience in public relations and is known for her creative contributions with public relations strategies, communications plans, analyzing effective media campaigns and serving as a spokesperson.

She is a graduate of Mansfield University in Pennsylvania and The American University in Washington, D.C.

Alexander Named Acting Planning Director



Angela Alexander has been named Acting Division Director of Planning and Transportation Data. Alexander most recently served as State Transportation Planning Administrator. She replaces Mike Thomas, who accepted a new position with the Department.

As Director, Alexander is responsible for managing Georgia's statewide transportation planning process and the collection and sharing of transportation data, including vehicle volumes and the state route network. In addition, she has oversight of the Department's Transportation Enhancement Program, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Program, the Congestion and Mitigation/Air Quality coordination and the Scenic Byways Program.

A veteran GDOT employee, Alexander joined the Department in 1987 as a Transportation Engineer II. She was promoted to Assistant Group Leader in Road Design and then to Group Leader in the Office of Urban Design in 1995. Additionally, she has served as Assistant State Urban Design Engineer and Executive Assistant to the Chief Engineer.

Alexander is a graduate of North Carolina State University.

Commissioner Names Brown Acting District Engineer for District 7



Rachel Brown, with almost 20 years with GDOT, has been named Acting District Engineer for District 7. She is responsible for planning, organizing and directing the activities and operations of the district, which include metro Atlanta.

In her previous positions with the Department, Brown most recently served as Assistant District Engineer and Administrative Officer in the Chamblee office. Additionally, she has worked as an Area Engineer for the Atlanta Area Office and as the Assistant Area Engineer in the Decatur Area Office. Prior to those positions, Rachel spent part of her tenure in the Construction Claims Office as a Construction Claims Engineer; as a Project Manager in the Augusta Area Office; and as a Designer in District 2 (Tennille) Design.

GEORGIA



GEORGIA
MILEPOST

Georgia Department of Transportation
One Georgia Center
600 West Peachtree Street, N.W.
Atlanta, GA 30308

www.dot.ga.gov