



Transportation Improvements In The Central Savannah River Regional District

On behalf of the Georgia Department of Transportation and the State Transportation Board, I want to congratulate the voters of the Central Savannah River Regional District. Your vote to approve the Transportation Referendum, or T-SPLOST as it is known, was a courageous and visionary investment.

I know it was a difficult decision. Voting to pay additional taxes - even just a penny - in these struggling times for Georgia families and businesses is no small sacrifice.

It is a commitment – to economic development, to quality of life – your commitment to your community and your future.

In turn, I make a commitment to you. Georgia DOT will do our part. We will complete T-SPLOST projects efficiently, on time and within budget, period. One reason why critics said the referendum would fail was that voters would not be willing to invest in transportation. You proved them wrong. Another argument was that the Transportation Department would not be able to deliver. We are going to prove that wrong too.

A clear implementation process is in place and already underway. The necessary intergovernmental agreements are being finalized and we will be meeting in the next week or so with your Central Savannah River Regional Commission members to finalize our strategy for delivering projects on time and on budget. A program manager and a Central Savannah Citizens Review Committee (to be appointed by the Governor, Lieutenant Governor and Speaker of the Georgia House of Representatives) will soon be in place. Collection of the referendum levy will begin this coming January and work on the first round of projects should begin next year. Full disclosure and absolute transparency will be the standard. Be it the \$50 million widening of State Route 28 in Columbia County or the \$500,000 school access road in Glascock County, complete and current information on project work status, schedules, budgets and monies spent will be provided to both the citizens review committee and the public in general through regularly updated reports and a dedicated website. We are committed to work with each county and municipality over the life of the program on a routine basis.

Finally, allow me to put to rest a continuing concern I hear from some in the three regions that approved the referendum – that somehow your T-SPLOST funds will be diverted to other projects elsewhere in the state, in areas which rejected the referendum. Let me state as clearly and emphatically as possible that this simply is not going to happen. State law prohibits it. The Transportation Board and I will not allow it – under any circumstance. It will not occur. This is your money and it will be spent on your projects in your communities. Further, we are going to continue our normal program investments in your region too, also as state law and fairness dictate.

This is your time. Governor Deal expressed it best when he commented after the election that the rest of Georgia now will “watch you grow.” Georgia DOT will be proud to help.

Keith Golden is Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Transportation.