**Interstate 49 North Project Descriptions**

- 455-09-0010 - Engineering Underway, ROW Acquisition, Clearing & Embankment (as funds are available)
- 455-09-0009 - Engineering Underway, ROW Acquisition, Clearing & Embankment (as funds are available)
- 455-09-0008 - Engineering Underway, ROW Acquisition, Clearing & Embankment (as funds are available)
- 455-09-0007 - Engineering Underway, ROW Acquisition, Clearing & Embankment (as funds are available)
- 455-09-0006 - Engineering Underway, ROW Acquisition, Clearing & Embankment (as funds are available)
- 455-09-0005 - Engineering Underway, ROW Acquisition, Clearing & Embankment (as funds are available)
- 455-09-0004 - Engineering Underway, ROW Acquisition, Clearing & Embankment (as funds are available)
- 455-09-0003 - Engineering Underway, ROW Acquisition, Clearing & Embankment (as funds are available)
- 455-09-0002 - Engineering Underway, ROW Acquisition, Clearing & Embankment (as funds are available)
- 455-09-0001 - Engineering Underway, ROW Acquisition, Clearing & Embankment (as funds are available)
- 455-09-0000 - Engineering Underway, ROW Acquisition, Clearing & Embankment (as funds are available)

**Q & A: Geographic Information Systems**

**What is it?**
A Geographic Information System (GIS) is mapping software that links information about where things are with information about what things are like. Just like a paper map, a GIS will have dots and points that represent features; lines that represent roads; and small areas that feature lakes and rivers. The difference between a paper map and a GIS is that in a GIS the information comes from a database and is shown on the digital map as a layer. The information contained within the database, the layer, is shown only if the user wants it to be shown. For example, a GIS user can show the cities, roads, or lakes within a parish or they can turn off each individual layer depending on their needs.

**Why is it important?**
GIS plays a significant role in the day-to-day functions of information gathering agencies; the way this information is distributed to other agencies and organizations, and how it is disseminated to the public. By integrating GIS with government processes, staff can:
- Create an information database that shares information resources, reduces data redundancy, and increases data accuracy.
- Perform joint project analysis and provide decision support.
- Streamline processes to increase efficiency, automate tasks, and save time and money.
- Help officials by providing queries, analysis, and map data in support of the decision making process.

**State Treasurer’s Unique Funding Proposal**

Could the Louisiana Department of the Treasury’s Unclaimed Property Program provide the solution to the funding shortage the state is currently experiencing for the completion of Interstate 49? The answer is yes, according to State Treasurer John Kennedy. He proposes taking the $15 million in excess unclaimed property the state receives each year and using it to service the debt on revenue bonds or use the excess annual collections on a pay-as-you-go basis. It would not require raising taxes.

“This would not take anyone’s unclaimed property or change the state’s promise to return it,” said Treasurer Kennedy. “The full faith and credit of the state of Louisiana will stand behind its obligation to return this unclaimed property, just as it does now.”

In order for the interstate to be constructed, the state is required to provide the 20 percent of the funds. “We are asking the federal government to fund 80 percent of the cost of I-49 with a state match of 20 percent,” Treasurer Kennedy said. “To receive federal funds for the project, we need to communicate a specific plan now for providing the state’s match.”

By securing a funding plan, the congressional delegation can more easily secure federal monies for this economic development and infrastructure project. Completion of both I-49 North and South will create more than 78,000 jobs for the state.

“There is not an infrastructure project or economic development initiative in Louisiana that is not more important than I-49 North and South,” said Treasurer Kennedy.
I-49 North Groundbreaking

On Thursday, April 7, 2005, elected officials, community activists, and representatives from LaDOTD gathered to celebrate the start of construction on the first 3.3 mile section of the 36 mile Interstate 49 extension to the Arkansas state line. Work consists of clearing and grubbing 230 acres between Mira Myrtis Road and LA 168 in north Caddo Parish. Construction is estimated to take 75 working days and will cost approximately $576,880.

With officials from Arkansas in the audience at the ceremony, Mr. Al Kessler, Chairman of the I-49 Coalition told them, “Arkansas, we are coming to meet you at the border.” Though funding has not been secured to complete the entire segment, LaDOTD Secretary Johnny Bradford said, “We hope for and are working hard for money to complete I-49.”

For more information about Interstate 49 North projects, please see page 2.

Southern Loop Interchange Opens

Representatives from LaDOTD, elected officials, and citizens were on hand March 24, 2005, for the official ribbon cutting for the Southern Loop interchange at Interstate 49.

Nearly a year after construction began, crews finished working on the Southern Loop on March 12, 2005. This project has been in the works for about ten years.

With the Loop’s completion, residents in southeast Shreveport now have easier access to I-49. Officials and residents also expect the new extension to alleviate congestion during rush hour on both Ellerbe Road and Wallace Lake Road.