

I-10 widening project to create 520 jobs in Southwest Valley

Project in fast lane as it speeds toward bidding

by **David Madrid** - Apr. 1, 2009 09:50 AM
The Arizona Republic

If speed is the intent of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, then the Interstate 10 widening project in the Southwest Valley is hurtling along as it comes up for bid two weeks after it was approved.

On March 13, the State Transportation Board endorsed a priority list of shovel-ready projects across Arizona. The first five projects in Maricopa County include four in the West Valley and one in the North Valley.

The first round of 14 state highway construction projects totaling \$85 million are now advertised for bid and should be under construction this summer. The other projects will follow soon.

The State Transportation Board approved 41 projects statewide totaling \$350 million.

In the Southwest Valley, the \$43.2 million I-10 widening project from Sarival Avenue to Verrado Way is estimated to create about 520 jobs.

"These projects will both extend and create jobs in our vital construction industry, with impacts on other sectors of the economy. This is a big economic boost that also provides Arizonans with much-needed highway improvements," Gov. Jan Brewer said. "Much of this money quickly returns to local economies across the state helping to provide the recovery we need."

Companies interested in bidding for the state projects can view details at www.azdot.gov/Highways/CNS/phone_sheet.asp.

Laura Douglas, a spokeswoman for ADOT, said the length of the advertisement period is not necessarily the same for all 14 projects.

Each period "gives potential contractors ample time, several weeks, to review the plans and specifications and prepare their bids," she said. "Then on the bid-opening date, all bids from all contractors are due."

All the bids will be publicly read and verified on the bid-opening date. Contractors may submit their bids before the due date. The State Transportation Board will award the contracts during a monthly meeting.

A group of project advertisements will go out every few weeks, until the remaining 27 projects are out. All 41 ads will have to be out within 120 days.

The projects are grouped in a way to create a competitive bidding environment, Douglas said.

"This first group of 14 projects, for example, includes a variety of sizes and costs," she said. "ADOT is committed to giving the statewide contracting community an equal opportunity to compete for projects. That's the goal of these American Recovery and Reinvestment Act projects, to spread work around the state."

All transportation projects funded with stimulus money must be completed within three years.

Under the funding formula approved by the transportation board, Maricopa County gets \$130 million for five projects. Pima County will get \$46 million for eight projects, and the state's 13 other counties get \$175 million for 28 projects.

ADOT offers more information at www.azdot.gov/recovery. Information from the federal perspective is available at www.recovery.gov.