



BRANDON L. BEACH
District 6

11605 Haynes Bridge Road
Suite 100
Alpharetta, Georgia 30004

678.397.0564
770.594.1059 (Fax)

bbeach@gnfcc.com

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Transportation Board Holds First Meeting of 2011

The State Transportation Board kicked off its first meeting of the new year on the heels of one of the most widespread snow and ice events Georgia has seen in 15 years.

During the worst of the storm, dangerous road conditions prohibited citizen travel, but more than 2,000 Georgia DOT employees weathered below-freezing temperatures to clear the interstates and state routes—many called away from their families the entire week.

Chairman Rudy Bowen presented a resolution on behalf of the Board and the Department, in appreciation for employees' dedication and tireless service in the course of the winter weather event. Mr. Bowen said, "Our employees worked in dangerous conditions trying to make the roadways safe for Georgia's citizens. I thank them all for their commitment and their sacrifices."

In an effort to improve the Department's performance on future weather emergencies, Chairman Bowen formed a four-member Special Project Coordinating Committee to provide guidance and assistance with weather related emergencies. Committee members include Robert Brown (CD 4), who will serve as chairman, Brandon Beach (CD6), David Doss (CD 11) and Jay Shaw (CD 1).

The State Transportation Board approved projects for the February letting that included 21 projects in the regular program and 69 Local Maintenance Improvement Grant (LMIG) projects. Combined, the projects are valued at more than \$57 million. See letting report attached. Several Board committees met in advance of the full Board Meeting. Meeting highlights are below:

Administrative: Frank Wingate of LifeSpan Technologies gave a presentation on some of the potential benefits of using technology versus visual inspection on state bridges. The technology is designed to capture and evaluate conditions of bridges in a way that may not be available through a visual inspection.

Finance: The Governor's recommendations for the Amended FY 2011 and FY 2012 budgets were presented. Motor Fuel Funds were reduced by \$8 million to reflect actual collections for 2010. Federal Aid matching was also reduced. State General Funds were also reduced by 8 percent

For FY 2012, the Governor's Motor Fuel Fund estimate is above \$898 million, up 5 percent from 2010 collections. However, the State General Fund budget was reduced by more than \$600,000, or 9 percent. There is also a reduction in Transit contracts, Transit operations and Employee Retirement System (ERS) adjustments.

Legislative: Further explanation was given concerning the Environmental legislation item on the Legislative Agenda. Details were given to clarify that the legislation does not alleviate Georgia DOT's financial responsibility; that the Department would still need to provide remediation efforts to violations of the Erosion and Sedimentation Control Act; and the law would only remove the punitive fine.

Changes were also made to the Legislative Agenda. The Motor Fuel Revenue agenda item to redirect the 4th percent of motor fuel sales tax back to GDOT was removed. Additionally, legislation to specifying the rules more clearly On-Premise Signs was added.

Public Private Partnerships (P3): Status updates on the North by Northwest, Multi Modal Passenger Terminal (MMPT), Rest Area/Welcome Center, and Communication Towers projects was given.

Statewide Transportation Planning (SWTP): An update was given on the Roundtable meetings. The last meeting was held on January 20th in the Heart of Georgia. These meetings have been well attended in local communities and have received very positive feedback on the process. Meetings will start back this summer as the process of soliciting projects begins.

Also, a presentation was given on 2010 transportation ballot measures. There was a general analysis of what made these measures successful, especially during times where resources are limited. Seventy-one percent of all ballot initiatives from last November passed.

Renay Blumenthal of the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce gave an update on the campaign for the referendum on HB 277 for the Atlanta region. With a public vote date of summer 2012 looming, many organization and agencies are coming together to support the HB 277 campaign both financially and with other resources.

Did You Know?

STATE FUND COLLECTIONS

The estimated motor fuel collection, fiscal year to date, is \$470,411,036.73 and is 3.88 percent over budget. This represents an increase of 16.02% over last year's collections of \$405,443,895.88 for the same time period.

TOTAL GDOT EMPLOYMENT FIGURE

The total employment figure for the month ending December 31, 2010 is 4,784.

MAJOR PROJECTS OPENED TO TRAFFIC

McIntosh County: 4,832 miles of widening and reconstruction on I-95/SR 405 beginning south of the Glynn County line and extending north of SR 251.

Cook County: 10,056 miles of widening for additional lanes and roadway construction on I-75/SR 401 beginning at CR 246 (Kinard Bridge Road) and extending to CR 204 (Southwell Boulevard).

McDuffie County : 8,282 miles of widening and resurfacing for additional lanes and construction on SR 17 (Thomson Bypass) beginning at CR 311 and extending to CR 20.

Bartow County: 1,198 miles of widening for additional lanes and reconstruction on Old Alabama Road beginning east of SR 293 and extending west of I-75/SR 401.

2,216 miles of widening and reconstruction on SR 113 (Old Alabama Road) beginning at CR 699 and extending east of SR 293.

Next Board Meeting: Atlanta, Georgia— February 17th