

# \$45 million in stimulus money to fund area road work

by Ron Fonger | The Flint Journal  
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GENESEE COUNTY, Michigan -- Just in time for summer driving, more than \$45 million in federal stimulus money is on its way to the county for transportation, including \$26.4-million for rebuilding more than six miles of I-475.

In addition to asphalt and mass transit, the new money also is paying for a new traffic tool that will tell I-75 drivers what lies ahead.

Traffic planners hope the addition of what they call an "intelligent transportation system" will persuade more drivers to shift onto I-475 from I-75 during peak congestion.

"It's information the driver can use to make an informed decision. Especially on Fridays and Sundays, I-75 gets clogged up," said Mike Hemmingsen, Davison Transportation Service Center manager for the Michigan Department of Transportation.

Using information collected by radar beams, roadside signs will tell drivers about how much time it will take them to travel from the junction of I-75 and I-475 in Grand Blanc Township to I-475 and I-75 in Mt. Morris Township.

I-75 drivers will see the new message signs later this year with work starting in the spring.

"They can be helpful as long as the information is accurate," said Neil A. Webster, 37, of Burton.

"The signs that can indicate accidents (ahead) are also very helpful. I have been able to save me time a couple of times" by avoiding those areas.

Webster commutes to work in the Detroit area, spending plenty of time on area roads.

Shovel-work on I-475, easily the best-funded stimulus transportation project, probably won't start until 2010, Hemmingsen said.

MDOT plans to shut down all traffic as pavement is replaced, switching from northbound to southbound once that job starts in earnest.

Concrete in the 6.6-mile stretch hasn't been replaced since that portion of I-475 was built in the early 1970s.

"We design our pavement to last 25 years and we got 36 out of this (stretch)," Hemmingsen said.

Five bridges in the area also are targeted for repairs as part of the same job.

The county transportation money from the federal stimulus funding includes \$8.5 million for the Mass Transportation Authority and three new MDOT projects that otherwise would not have been funded, Hemmingsen said.

Eight other projects, including creation of a new, more direct route to Kettering University from I-69, also received final approval from the county Metropolitan Alliance this week.

The county said in a news release that the \$45.9 million in construction spending will create more than 1,900 jobs.

- Flint Journal extras Federal money pours in for road work  
Here are the transportation projects worth at least \$1 million that have been funded with federal stimulus funds:

- \$26.4 million for road reconstruction and rehabilitation of five bridges on I-475 between I-75 on the south and I-69
- \$8.5 million for communication equipment and preventative maintenance for the Mass Transportation Authority.
- \$3 million for repairs and resurfacing of Morrish Road in Swartz Creek.
- \$2.3 million for a new gateway between I-69 and Kettering University.
- \$2 million for new electronic signs and an intelligent transportation system on I-75, I-69 and I-475.
- \$1.5 million for pavement repair on Pasadena Avenue from I-75 to the Flint city limits.
- \$1.3 million for concrete repair on Clio Road from Pierson to Carpenter roads.
- \$1.2 million for milling and resurfacing on Silver Parkway from Owen to Silver Lake roads in Fenton.