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3/21/2002

Transportation Board Moves Forward with Highway Improvements

The Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) awarded 110 construction and maintenance contracts worth \$162.4 million during its monthly meeting in Richmond today. Most of the projects are repaving of interstate and primary roads throughout the Commonwealth.

"VDOT is committed to maintaining a safe highway system," said Ray Pethtel, interim commissioner for the Virginia Department of Transportation. "No matter how tight the money situation may get, VDOT will continue to maintain the state's roads to the highest quality possible."

Of the 110 contracts awarded, 75 are repaving projects worth a total of \$122 million. Work will begin on those projects in April. Work will also begin on additional repaving projects of smaller, secondary roads as well.

"We are able to move projects along because VDOT is carefully managing its cash flow in a responsible manner," said Secretary Whitt Clement. "We are progressing with much needed maintenance work throughout the state."

Because of the uncertain economy, VDOT had put on hold approximately 120 contracts worth nearly \$255 million that were awarded by the CTB from October of 2001 to January of 2002. Many of those projects are moving forward with work on the \$136 million Pinners Point Interchange scheduled to begin next month. All remaining projects are scheduled to get under way by May.

As another cost-savings measure, VDOT asked contractors to shut down temporarily until April or later. To date, approximately 40 contractors have volunteered to stop work for a short period of time which will help VDOT to balance a \$143 million shortage in its budget by June. This was the amount in general funds that was depleted from VDOT during 2001-2002.

The voluntary shutdown involves secondary road projects, with most contracts under \$1 million each. Work on nearly all of those projects is scheduled to resume in April. The voluntary shutdown does not affect major projects such as the Springfield Interchange and the Woodrow Wilson Bridge.

Top construction contracts awarded this month are:

- I-64 Alleghany County**-project will replace two deficient bridges over Jackson Bridge near the Mallow Mall Interchange. Both directions of traffic will run across a single bridge during

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construction but traffic impacts will be minimal.
Contractor: Branch Highways, Inc., Roanoke, Va.
Contract award: \$11.3 million
Estimated completion date- Fall 2004

- **Route 58, Mecklenburg County**-project will widen 3.5 miles of Route 58 from more than a half-mile west of route 1 to nearly a mile south of South Hill. Construction includes two bridges over Reedy Creek.
Contractor: Key Construction Company, Incorporated, Clarksville, VA
Contract award: \$9.7 million
Estimated completion date- November 2003

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