

# Arizona Daily Star®

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## State IDs 'stimulus- ready' road projects

By Howard Fischer

CAPITOL MEDIA SERVICES

PHOENIX — State transportation officials are already lining up projects they hope to get the federal government to finance through a proposed stimulus package.

The list, ranging from major highway construction to sign replacements, represents contracts the state says it could award within six months, according to Tim Tait, spokesman for the Arizona Department of Transportation.

The ability to put workers in the field that quickly, he said, makes the projects likely candidates for consideration by the incoming Obama administration, which wants to jump-start the economy through new spending and new jobs.

Tait said the list, with its \$869 million price tag, does not necessarily represent the projects the state Transportation Board considers the most important. Some of them are not even on the board's five-year plan.

"The emphasis here was looking at projects that are ready and that we can move on quickly," he said.

Tait said, though, this is not just a "wish list" to grab some federal cash while it's available.

"I think the argument can be made that all these projects are needed," he said.

"The needs in Arizona far outpace the available funding," Tait said, with the state's rapid growth occurring as gasoline-tax collections are declining. And a proposal to ask voters to increase the state sales tax by a penny to generate \$42.6 billion over the next 30 years failed to qualify for the ballot.

"This is an opportunity for us to move forward with those projects that we have had ready or we can make ready very quickly," he said.

Tait said what the federal government finally funds from the list — assuming Congress approves a stimulus package — will depend on the criteria in the legislation. For example, he said, ADOT is only guessing the government will favor projects that can start in six months.

"We tried to find something reasonable and identify the projects that fit that criteria," he said.

Tait said ADOT cannot tell at this point whether any stimulus package will require states to offer matching cash.

ADOT also has come up with a separate list of 65 projects at 20 airports that could be ready to go to bid in 180 days and that fit the criteria for a stimulus package. Nearly half of the \$356 million total would be for

### Road work

Some of the projects in Southern and Central Arizona on the state list.

#### Cochise County

- Repave eastbound I-10 from east Benson to Johnson Road — \$13 million

#### Maricopa County

- Build 17 miles of Loop 303 from Lake Pleasant Road to I-17 — \$146 million
- Widen I-10 from Dysart Road to Sarival Avenue — \$59 million
- Widen Grand Avenue from 99th Avenue to Loop 303 — \$42 million

#### Pima County

- Repave I-10 from Houghton to Rita roads — \$6 million
- Repave West Ajo Way/Arizona 86 from the Tohono O'odham Nation boundary to Brawley Wash — \$3.5 million
- Improvements at Lukeville Port of Entry — \$1.5 million

- Sign replacement along I-19 — \$1.15 million

#### Pinal County

- Widen I-10 from I-8 to Picacho/Arizona 87 — \$50 million
- Repave Arizona 87 from south of Coolidge to Arizona 287

part of the "people mover" project at Sky Harbor International Airport designed to link terminals to a light-rail line.

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