



July 22, 2013

Ohio speeding up road projects with turnpike bonds

By John Seewer

TOLEDO, Ohio (AP) -- Highway and bridge construction projects that likely would have been on the shelf for a decade or longer across Ohio are moving to the front of the line now that the state is going forward with Gov. John Kasich's plan to use the Ohio Turnpike to raise money for roadwork.

Money from selling bonds will jump-start 27 transportation projects in northern Ohio over the next two years and free up cash for another 14 projects in central and southern Ohio.

All told, it adds up to about \$3 billion in road projects over the next six years, Kasich announced Monday.

The wide-ranging list of construction projects will touch all corners of the state and include plans for adding lanes on several interstate highways and rebuilding several congested interchanges.

Lawmakers signed off this year on the governor's proposal to cash in on the turnpike. The state will raise about \$1 billion through bond sales backed by future toll revenues.

"It's the most creative infrastructure plan in America," Kasich said.

Ohio will be able to move forward with a large number of road projects, he said, at a time when other states are raising taxes or struggling to keep up with needed work.

Improving the state's infrastructure will also make it more attractive to businesses and bring jobs to the state, Kasich said. "It means we're going to be a much stronger economic artery for America," he said.

Among the projects being speeded up are:

- Adding a third lane along Interstate 75 in Toledo and rebuilding an interchange at Interstate 475 and U.S. 20 in Lucas County.
- Constructing a second inner-belt bridge near downtown Cleveland and widening Interstates 77 and 271 in Cuyahoga County.
- Rebuilding the Interstate 70 and 71 interchange in Columbus and the Interstate 270 and U.S. 33 interchange in Franklin County.
- Widening Interstate 75 in Hamilton County and building a new interchange at Interstate 71 and Martin Luther King Drive in Cincinnati.

"The projects are all high-priority projects for each of the regions," said Greg Murphy, chief of staff for the Ohio Department of Transportation. "Some they've been waiting on for decades."

Article continued here: <http://www.hudsonhubtimes.com/ap%20state/2013/07/22/ohio-speeding-up-road-projects-with-turnpike-bonds>

###