Second round of federal transportation stimulus projects announced

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SALEM, Ore. â€“ Governor Ted Kulongoski on Wednesday applauded the Oregon Transportation Commission for its prompt action to put federal stimulus dollars to work, funding another 59 transportation projects across the state. In total, the commission now has funded 100 projects with federal dollars provided to Oregon under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. These projects will create or sustain an estimated 3,276 jobs this summer. â€œWith unemployment exceeding 10 percent in Oregon, it is urgent that we utilize every tool available to us to preserve and create jobs, getting paychecks into workers hands as soon as possible,â€• Governor Kulongoski said. â€œThe Oregon Transportation Commission and the Oregon Department of Transportation demonstrated this sense of urgency in developing a process to get the contracts signed and out the door. Their leadership will lead to thousands of jobs across the state.â€• Wednesdayâ€™s committee action exhausts the $234 million in federal stimulus funds coming to the state transportation department. It also means that the department met the federal requirement to contract 50 percent of the funds within 120 days. To meet this deadline, the commission scheduled special meetings to hear testimony on potential projects. At the most recent meeting, the commission heard testimony from 80 of the 170 jurisdictions that submitted more than 320 applications for the funds. â€œWe received requests for more than five times the dollars available,â€• said ODOT Director Matt Garrett. â€œThe need for infrastructure investment is enormous.â€• The federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act included approximately $334 million for transportation projects across the state. Oregon Counties, cities and Metropolitan Planning Organizations received $100 million of the $334 million from the Act, and have one year to obligate the funds. Oregon will also apply for other stimulus transportation funding grants, such as for rail systems, as more information about these opportunities is available from the federal government. Governor Kulongoski today will mark the first highway project to break ground that is funded by federal stimulus funds. An event was scheduled this morning off of Highway 26 at the Hillsboro Stadium (Gordon Faber Recreation Complex), NW 229th Ave & NW Evergreen Pkwy, in Hillsboro. Attached is a list of projects approved by the commission may be viewed here.