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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **CONSTRUCTION BEGINS ON ORANGE COUNTY'S LARGEST RECOVERY ACT TRANSPORTATION PROJECT**

**Irvine** – The first shovels went into the ground today on a \$59.5 million project - the largest Recovery Act transportation project in Orange County - that will relieve congestion and ease a chronic traffic bottleneck along State Route 91 (SR-91), a major transportation artery connecting Orange County with the Inland Empire.

"My Administration is working hand-in-hand with President Obama's team to ensure stimulus dollars are pumped into California quickly and responsibly to stimulate the economy, and in this instance - invest in the future of California's transportation infrastructure," said Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger.

The project is funded primarily (\$47.9 million) by President Obama's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act). Additional state funding (\$5 million) is being provided through the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) and tolls (\$6.6 million) from Orange County Transportation Authority's (OCTA) 91 Express Lanes.

"Using federal stimulus dollars to fast track this project means creating jobs today and bringing relief to drivers for decades to come," said Orange County Transportation Authority Chairman Peter Buffa. "This partnership between local, state and federal agencies will greatly benefit commuters on this critical link between Orange County and the Inland Empire."

The project will widen six miles of eastbound SR-91 between SR-241 and SR-71. This section of highway is a busy commuter and goods movement corridor with an average daily traffic volume of 300,000. The project, which is targeted for completion in late 2010, will significantly ease congestion by eliminating a habitual traffic chokepoint on SR-91 near Coal Canyon.

"State Route 91 acts as the connecting thread that unites the people and economies of Riverside and Orange counties. The new eastbound lane will be a welcome improvement to our shared transportation system and the Riverside County Transportation Commission is honored to be part of a partnership with Caltrans and the Orange County Transportation Authority to make it possible," said Bob Magee, RCTC Chairman and mayor of Lake Elsinore.



"This project is a solid investment in this region's infrastructure, and it underscores Governor Schwarzenegger's commitment to expedite the implementation of the Recovery Act," said Caltrans Director Randy Iwasaki. "Improving mobility in this corridor also improves the air quality of this area."

Since May, 20 state Recovery Act transportation projects worth \$27.6 million have been completed. Under Governor Schwarzenegger's leadership, California leads the nation with more than \$2 billion in Recovery Act funding obligated to 685 highway and local street projects statewide. Of these, 231 projects worth \$1.4 billion have been awarded contracts to begin work. California was the first state in the nation to obligate \$1 billion of Recovery Act funding, doing so two months ahead of the federal June 30, 2009 deadline. For more information on the Recovery Act visit <http://recovery.ca.gov/>.

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