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RTA marks 3rd anniversary of plan, sales tax approval

One of the Regional Transportation Authority's major roadway projects is under construction this week, just as the RTA celebrates its third anniversary.

On Monday, May 11, the RTA joined the Town of Marana, the Arizona Department of Transportation and other regional officials at the groundbreaking of the \$50 million Twin Peaks interchange. The RTA is contributing \$32 million toward that project. Another project on Camino de Manana and managed by the Town of Marana is out to bid.

During its first three years, the RTA has collected \$188 million in excise tax collections and has committed \$386 million toward 259 projects that have been approved by the RTA Board.

"We are keeping a close eye on the economy, and as more projects come online we anticipate that we will seek bond funding to ensure that the projects are completed as quickly as possible while we continue to collect revenue over the life of the plan," said Gary Hayes, Executive Director of the RTA.

RTA improvements have been implemented across the region and in all of the elements of the RTA plan, which include roadway, safety, transit and environmental and economic vitality improvements.

Among the highlights through March 2009:

- The RTA's announcement early this year of moving toward a regional seamless transit system, most recently including the introduction of neighborhood transit circulator service known as the Sun Shuttle in the communities of Marana, Oro Valley/Catalina and Green Valley/Sahuarita. A rebranding of transit vehicles included a new color scheme for consistency, a new centralized customer service center and an upcoming Smart Card fare technology to simplify fare payment and system transfers.
- Many transit services have been implemented through Sun Tran to expand weekday,

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evening and weekend service and add express service. Also, the \$30 million bus storage maintenance facility is well on its way to completion.

- The citizens committee for the RTA's largest roadway project, Grant Road, has determined a final alignment and is now beginning the final design process, with construction set to begin early in the second period of the RTA.
- Safety improvements include 81 intersection improvements and 30 pedestrian crossing improvements, known as high-intensity activated crosswalks or HAWKs.

During the past year, the RTA took steps to confirm the outcome of the 2006 election, which the State Attorney General validated last month. The recount was conducted after an investigation by the Attorney General based on local political parties and individual allegations that the computerized election data had been manipulated.

"We were confident that a recount would confirm the election results," said RTA Chair and Marana Mayor Ed Honea. "The RTA's reputation was at stake and we supported the recount to help put all the unnecessary rumors to bed. I hope that the region will come together once again and support the ongoing efforts of the RTA. We are delivering projects as promised."

The Regional Transportation Authority is the fiscal manager of the \$2.1 billion plan approved by Pima County voters on May 16, 2006. The RTA Board is comprised of representatives from the local jurisdictions in Pima County, including the cities of Tucson and South Tucson, Pima County, the towns of Marana, Oro Valley and Sahuarita, the Pascua Yaqui Tribe and the Tohono O'odham Nation. A representative of the Arizona State Transportation Board also serves on the board. For more information about the RTA plan, visit www.RTAmobility.com or call (520) 770-9410.