



Glynn roadwork has historic price tag; The \$199 million widening of 6 miles of I-95 is the biggest contract ever by DOT.

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BRUNSWICK -- Contracts have been awarded for \$199 million to widen 6 miles of Interstate 95 in Glynn County to six lanes, and \$6 million to resurface and add turning lanes to the St. Simons Island causeway to help stop rear-end collisions.

Gov. Sonny Perdue and Department of Transportation Commissioner Harold Linnenkohl announced the \$205 million in roadway improvements. Because it is part of the Governor's Fast Forward program, the I-95 work is scheduled to be complete by fall of 2009. The \$199 million contract awarded to Tidewater Skanska Inc. of Norfolk, Va., is the largest contract in DOT history -- surpassing one in Gwinnett County by nearly \$52 million.

"Interstate 95 is a vital corridor," Perdue said. "It allows the movement of goods to and from Georgia's ports, moves commuters and vacationers to our coast and is a critical part of our hurricane evacuation plan."

The contract includes widening to six lanes four double bridges on the stretch, including the Turtle River bridge west of Brunswick, one of the longest along the highway in Georgia.

The smaller contract may be deemed more important by many Glynn County residents because it could help reduce accidents on the F.J. Torras Causeway, where traffic is sometimes tied up for hours by rear-end accidents, especially during early-morning and late-afternoon commutes. The heavily traveled causeway is the only roadway to and from the island.

Under the contract awarded to Plant Improvement Co. Inc. of Brunswick, the 4-mile causeway will be milled and resurfaced, turn lanes will be installed at some locations and the tollbooth structure will be removed. The state removed the toll of 35 cents per trip or \$35 annual fee in 2003 after it was determined it had raised enough money to pay some maintenance costs. It was also decided enough money had been raised to pay for the removal of the toll plaza, but DOT officials said the money was spent elsewhere.

Glynn County Commission Chairman Don Hogan said the county has been dealing with the DOT for some time on making safety improvements on the causeway, which is four lanes wide with no median.

"This is what they've come up with in trying to deal with the rear-ending situation," Hogan said.

Sherry Beal, spokeswoman for the DOT's district office in Jesup, could not say exactly where the turn lanes will be installed.

Many accidents occur at the entrance to a subdivision near the western end of the causeway, at a bait store near the midpoint of the causeway and on access roads to public fishing areas at bridges.

The contract also includes the installation of paved aprons along the roadway, Beal said.

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CAPTION(S):

Mug: Perdue

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