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**STATE, LOCAL OFFICIALS BREAK GROUND ON WATFORD CITY  
U.S. 85 BYPASS**  
**State Provides \$72 Million in Funding for Phase I of Bypass Project**

BISMARCK, N.D. - Gov. Jack Dalrymple, North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT) Director Grant Levi, Watford City Mayor Brent Sanford, and other state and local officials broke ground today on the U.S. 85 Watford City Bypass, which will re-route Highway 85 traffic onto a new roadway southwest of Watford City. The bypass will enhance safety and traffic movement throughout the area, as well as meet the region's transportation needs resulting from increased economic growth and activity.

"Watford City and McKenzie County have experienced rapid growth as a result of the state's flourishing energy industry, bringing opportunities and challenges to the region," Dalrymple said. "The state is committed to helping the area address these challenges by making historic investments in infrastructure enhancements. The Watford City U.S. 85 Bypass will keep trucks off Main Street, enhance roadway safety and allow for continued economic growth in the region."

The state provided \$72 million to fund Phase I of the bypass project, which will include a four-lane roadway with turning lanes and a signalized intersection. The first phase of the project will include a west entrance that will begin 3.5 miles west of Watford City on U.S. Highway 85 and then re-connect with Highway 85 3.5 miles south of the city. Construction will begin next month with a projected completion at the end of the 2014 construction season.

Phase II of the bypass project will begin at N.D. Highway 23 to the southeast of Watford City and will connect to Phase I of the bypass project at U.S. Highway 85 near 24<sup>th</sup> Street NW. The second phase will be bid in February 2014, with an expected completion later in the year.

"This new bypass will take truck traffic out of the heart of Watford City where about 3,700 trucks travel each day," Levi said. "The Watford City bypass is one of the major projects we are doing to enhance traffic movement on U.S. 85. This project, along with others planned in the future, will help provide a safe and reliable transportation system for years to come."

NDDOT has begun constructing four lanes on U.S Highway 85 between Watford City and Williston. The first phase of this \$300 million project, from Watford City to McKenzie County Road 16, is approximately 33 miles long and is tentatively scheduled for completion in the fall of 2014. Construction on Phase II, from County Road 16 to Williston, is scheduled to begin next year and will include the replacement of the Lewis and Clark Bridge over the Missouri River near Williston.

In all, the state will invest about \$2.6 billion to support the state's oil and gas region during the current biennium. The state commitment – more than twice the amount of the previous, two-year funding package of about \$1.2 billion – includes funding for highway, county and township road improvements; water supply and water treatment projects and the development of affordable housing. Other state commitments include stationing more Highway Patrol troopers in western North Dakota; enhancements to the region's court system and funding for dust suppression projects.