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Dalrymple Kicks Off Bypass Projects in New Town, Watford City

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BISMARCK, N.D. – Gov. Jack Dalrymple today is joining North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT) Director Grant Levi and other state and local officials to break ground on two highway bypass projects that will significantly enhance traffic flow and reduce truck traffic in the western North Dakota communities of Watford City and New Town. The state is investing \$409 million to cover all costs for the construction of truck bypass routes for the western North Dakota cities of Williston, Watford City, Dickinson, New Town and Alexander.

"These bypasses will provide greatly needed traffic relief to these growing communities and enhance road safety," Dalrymple said. "The work that begins on these projects today is part of the most ambitious infrastructure improvement program in state history and represents our ongoing commitment to helping our western North Dakota communities meet the challenges of rapid growth." The New Town Truck Reliever Route is a two-lane roadway project that will re-route truck traffic on State Highway 23 around the northeast of New Town, providing a permanent truck bypass for the community. The 3.2-mile project will improve traffic flow through New Town and surrounding area as well as help meet the forecasted traffic demand. The bypass is estimated to cost \$25 million and will be completed this year.

In addition to New Town's truck reliever route, the state is investing \$10.8 million to reconstruct and widen State Highway 1804, from State Highway 23 to the truck reliever route. The Watford City Southeast Bypass will re-route truck traffic from ND Highway 23 to the southeast of Watford City, enhancing safety and traffic movement. The \$50.3 million project will be built to accommodate four lanes of traffic. Work on the bypass, which will be nearly six miles long, is expected to be completed this fall. Last year, the state began construction of the Watford City Southwest Bypass at a cost of about \$80 million. Watford City's Southwest Bypass, which will direct truck traffic around the city's western edge, will be completed this fall. Nearly 3,900 trucks travel through Watford City each day and about another 3,500 trucks pass through New Town daily, Levi said.

"This investment in New Town and Watford City will enhance traffic flow in the area," Levi said. "These new truck bypass projects will provide alternative routes for trucks around these communities and help to enhance the quality of life for the region's citizens."

Last month, Dalrymple joined state and local officials to kick off more than \$190 million in construction for truck bypasses in Williston and Alexander.

The Williston Truck Reliever Route is a four-lane roadway project northwest of Williston that will provide a permanent bypass for the community. The 13-mile project will improve traffic flow through Williston and areas west of the city and will help meet the forecasted traffic demand for the area. The bypass is estimated to cost more than \$162 million and will be constructed over the next two construction seasons. The first phase of the project has been bid and construction will begin this spring. Work on phase two will begin later this year and will be completed in 2015. In August 2012, the state completed a temporary bypass for Williston, providing alternate routes on both the west and east sides of the city. The temporary bypass has been diverting trucks to Williston's outer edges, easing traffic congestion and enhancing roadway safety.

The Alexander Truck Bypass will re-route US Highway 85 to the west of Alexander, enhancing safety and traffic movement for the community. The \$28 million project will be built to accommodate four lanes of traffic and will be approximately 3.7 miles long. The project is expected to be completed in the fall of 2014.

The NDDOT also will complete the building of an interim bypass route for Dickinson this construction season and has begun planning and design work on a permanent bypass routes for Dickinson and Killdeer.

The 2013 and 2014 construction seasons represent the largest road construction programs in state history, with more than \$1.6 billion in bids for roadway projects alone. While construction of bypasses in four communities is underway, work also will continue on large-scale projects that began last year, including the four-lane project on US 85 between Williston and Watford City.

In all, the state will invest about \$2.7 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 – 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 grants for local law enforcement agencies and emergency medical responders; stationing more Highway Patrol troopers in western North Dakota; enhancements to the region's court system and funding for dust suppression projects.