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Dalrymple, Officials Celebrate Completion of Western North Dakota Bypass, Four-Lane Projects

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BISMARCK, N.D. – Gov. Jack Dalrymple today joined North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT) Director Grant Levi and other state and local officials to celebrate the completion of three highway bypass projects in Watford City and Alexander, and the second phase of the US 85 four-lane project between Watford City and Williston.

The state has provided approximately \$200 million to construct the US 85 project to significantly enhance traffic flow and roadway safety in western North Dakota and the bypasses to reduce truck traffic in the communities of Watford City and Alexander.

“We are committed to continuing to address the impacts of rapid growth in western North Dakota, and a key part of those efforts is to ensure that the region’s roadways are safe and the truck traffic on its Main Streets is reduced,” said Dalrymple. “These bypass and four-lane projects represent significant investments in the region’s infrastructure and will bring much-needed traffic relief to these communities.”

The state has completed the construction of the Watford City Southwest and Southeast Bypasses, the Alexander Bypass, and the second phase of the US Highway 85 four-lane project from Williston to Watford City. The two Watford City bypasses will now re-route US 85 and ND 23 truck traffic around the city’s southwestern and southeastern edge to US 85 south. Construction work started last spring on the Alexander Bypass and US 85 truck traffic is now moved out of the city and onto the new roadway.

“Each day, about 13,000 vehicles, with about 5,000 being trucks, travel through each of these communities,” said Levi. “Now with the completion of these bypass projects we are restoring the quality of life for the communities of Watford City and Alexander. In addition, the opening of the second phase of the US 85 four-lane project is getting us one step closer to completing the highway project between Watford City and Williston.”

Today’s events commemorate the completion of \$200 million in projects, which include \$81 million for Watford City’s Southwest Bypass and \$50 million for its Southeast Bypass, \$28 million for the Alexander Bypass, and \$41 million to complete the second phase of the US 85 four-lane project.

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.

The state is investing \$409 million to cover all costs for the construction of truck bypass routes in western North Dakota. In addition to Watford City and Alexander, bypass projects are underway in Dickinson, New Town and Williston.

The NDDOT completed the building of an interim bypass route for Dickinson this construction season and has begun planning and design work on permanent bypass routes for Dickinson and Killdeer. Construction work also continues on the four-lane project on US 85 between Williston and Watford City. The first two phases have been completed this year and construction has begun on the third phase, which involves four-laning US 85 from north of Alexander to Williston and construction of a new Lewis and Clark Bridge.

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.