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*EDWARD G. RENDELL, Governor*

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## **GOVERNOR RENDELL REVIEWS ECONOMIC RECOVERY PROGRESS DURING VICE PRESIDENT BIDEN'S VISIT**

**CARLISLE, Cumberland County** – Pennsylvania has already invested \$1 billion from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act putting people to work on roads and bridges, upgrading water systems, investing in alternative energy and providing health care, Governor Edward G. Rendell today told Vice President Joseph R. Biden.

“We are making good on our promise to put people to work rebuilding the state’s economy with wise and efficient use of recovery dollars,” Governor Rendell said during a return trip to the Route 34 bridge near Carlisle on the first day of its reconstruction. “There will be 30 people working on this bridge in the coming months, including some workers who had been laid off.”

Pennsylvania beat by a month the Recovery Act June 29 deadline for obligating a significant portion of its transportation funding.

“I have directed PennDOT to have all of these critically needed Recovery Act contracts in place by the end of August — again far exceeding the federal deadlines.

“The \$1 billion in Recovery Act money we’ve invested so far is doing much more than funding bridge and road repairs. We’ve invested that money in upgrading water systems in 26 counties, extending unemployment benefits for 100,000 people, training workers, providing child care to 4,000 more kids, funding cutting-edge alternative energy projects, and providing health care,” Governor Rendell said.

“Yesterday, I announced that we would use stimulus funds to create more than 3,580 affordable rental units and, combined with other federal funds for neighborhood stabilization, put 3,000 people to work in construction and related jobs.”

Pennsylvania is the first state to take the Recovery Act-funded First Time Homebuyer Tax Rebates and convert them into immediate cash to help families make the down payments on their homes.

The Recovery Act road and bridge funding, combined with Governor Rendell's "Rebuild Pennsylvania" initiative which started last year means Pennsylvania will be investing nearly \$3 billion this year putting people to work — more than any other single-year investment.

This marked the second visit to the Route 34 bridge by Governor Rendell and Vice President Biden. On Feb. 11, they inspected the 80-year-old bridge to highlight the need for the then-pending American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The \$1.7 million contract for the bridge's replacement was awarded April 9 and new concrete bridge beams were ordered shortly afterwards.

U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, U. S. Senator Arlen Specter and a representative from the general contractor, J.D. Eckman of Chester County, participated in today's construction kick-off event.

The bridge closing was delayed until today to avoid disrupting local school bus routes. The new bridge will be opened to traffic in late November and the entire project is expected to be completed by spring of 2010.

"Recovery Act funding is making a difference in these tough economic times, and Pennsylvania has moved quickly to invest these dollars to put people to work on road and bridge repair projects," Governor Rendell said."

He outlined Pennsylvania's progress on recovery-funded transportation investments. To date, PennDOT has:

- obligated \$384 million for road and bridge projects;
- opened bids on 131 Recovery contracts worth more than \$300 million;
- awarded 108 Recovery contracts worth more than \$200 million; and
- started work on 78 projects worth \$168 million.

"Already, these efforts are paying off," the Governor said. "We have hundreds of people working and for the first time in memory, we saw a reduction in the number of structurally deficient bridges this year – from a peak of 6,034 late last year to 5,911 in March."

To learn more about how the federal Recovery Act will benefit Pennsylvania, visit [www.recovery.pa.gov](http://www.recovery.pa.gov).

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*The Rendell administration is committed to creating a first-rate public education system, protecting our most vulnerable citizens and continuing economic investment to support our communities and businesses. To find out more about Governor Rendell's initiatives and to sign up for his newsletter, visit: [www.governor.state.pa.us](http://www.governor.state.pa.us).*