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GOVERNOR CRIST HIGHLIGHTS ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF I-4/SELMON EXPRESSWAY CONNECTOR PROJECT DURING GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY

~~ ~Innovative financing approach leads to early project start~ ~~

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TAMPA – Continuing his focus on strengthening Florida's economy, Governor Charlie Crist today attended the groundbreaking ceremony for the I-4/Selmon Expressway Connector in Hillsborough County. The \$390 million construction project will be a new north-south toll road connecting Interstate-4 with the Selmon Expressway west of 31st Street.

"This construction project will create thousands of jobs, boost Florida's economy and significantly improve transportation options for the Tampa Bay region," said Governor Crist. "I am proud that the Florida Department of Transportation has met the challenge to move this and other projects in the state forward at a time when Floridians need to get back to work."

The I-4/Selmon Expressway Connector will link two major east-west corridors, significantly improving mobility for workers, the trucking industry and tourists. The elevated roadway will also provide exclusive truck lanes for direct access to the Port of Tampa and remove heavy truck traffic from local roads in Ybor City. In addition, the Connector will increase options for commuters to and from downtown Tampa, as well as provide residents with much-needed alternative routes during hurricane evacuations.

The I-4/Selmon Expressway Connector is anticipated to be built and open to serve motorists in three years. The project utilizes a build-finance approach in which the contractor secures a large portion of the financing during construction. When complete, the project will feature a state-of-the-art toll facility with an all-electronic toll collection system. The toll facility allows traffic to move at highway speeds and eliminates toll equipment maintenance which disrupts motorists. The electronic open road tolling will be done through SunPass and Toll-by-Plate tolling. A similar project, converting the Selmon Expressway to all-electronic tolling, is currently under construction and will work seamlessly with the Connector to keep traffic flowing.

The Governor was joined by Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Secretary Stephanie Kopelousos at Friday's groundbreaking ceremony.

"When public agencies partner with private industry, we can accelerate projects and better serve the people who work, live and visit Florida," said FDOT Secretary Kopelousos.

For more information and contacts on the project, please go to www.myTBI.com and click on "I-4 / Selmon Expressway Connector."