



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**REMARKS FOR BOB SCHAFFER-VICE PRESIDENT OF RANGER CONSTRUCTION AND
PRESIDENT, FLORIDA EAST COAST CHAPTER, AGC
STIMULUS SUCCESS MEDIA EVENT
MELBOURNE, FL
*October 30, 2009***

Good morning and thank you Noranne (Downs, FDOT District 5 Secretary) for hosting us today. No other sector has been as hard hit by the economic downturn as construction. Over the past twelve months, over a million construction workers have joined the ranks of the unemployed nationwide. Here in Florida, 15 percent of construction workers, over 75,000 people, have lost their jobs over the past twelve months.

While the country has been weathering a severe economic recession, the construction industry is suffering nothing less than a full depression. That is why the Associated General Contractors of America was an early and strong supporter of the stimulus plan Congress passed in February.

The 135 billion dollars in stimulus funds dedicated to construction and infrastructure projects will not turn things around for the trillion dollar construction on its own.

That being said, there's no doubt that many more construction workers in Florida and across the country would be out of work today were it not for the stimulus.

New federal reports being made public today will give us the first comprehensive picture of how many jobs the stimulus has helped directly create or save nationwide so far. As helpful as this information is though, it is sure to raise questions about whether the stimulus is working as intended.

The men and women standing behind me will tell you, as far as this project is concerned, the stimulus is doing exactly as it was intended. The 20.5 million dollars in stimulus funds being invested in this project to add new lanes to I-95 is saving jobs and putting Floridians back to work.

Thanks to this work, Ranger has already begun to hire what will ultimately be a half-dozen new employees working on this project. As important, the stimulus has allowed us to preserve dozens of jobs that we would otherwise have had to let go.

If it wasn't for the stimulus, more than 20 of our employees, many of them standing right behind me, wouldn't be working today. They would instead be among the more than 1,600 construction workers that have lost their job in Palm Bay and Melbourne since September 2008.

Just like the jobs covered in new federal reports, the jobs I am announcing today were created directly by the stimulus. They don't include the jobs with our suppliers that will be helped by new orders for cones, aggregate and steel.

Or at dealers like this that stand to benefit from increased demand for construction equipment. Nor do they include the jobs at nearby restaurants, where our crews will be eating lunch or at the stores where they'll buy work clothes and boots.

When everything is said and done, there will be a lot more local jobs in the Melbourne area thanks to this stimulus project. Fortunately, those new workers will have some extra lanes on I-95 to use on the way to work and back.

This isn't about whether the stimulus is working or not. It is about whether people are working. For the dozens of men and women that will be working on this project, the stimulus means a good job, warm food, and, in this weather at least, a cool home.

The stimulus is doing a good job keeping men and women like the ones here today working. But we'll still have to maintain our bridges, expand our highways and improve our transit systems long after the stimulus has run its course.

So unless we want the legacy of the stimulus to be more aging bridges, potholed streets and long unemployment lines, we need to urge our leaders in Washington to act quickly to pass the overdue six-year surface transportation bill with the levels of investments most experts say our country needs to stay competitive.

In a global economy where the difference between success and failure is often measured in seconds, we need to decide now. When the world's economies again heat up, do we want to be leading the way, or left behind stuck in traffic?

Thank you and now we would be happy to answer any questions you might have....

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