

Stimulus money is buying more than expected, as bids come in low



10:29 AM Thu, Aug 27, 2009 | [Permalink](#) | [Yahoo! Buzz](#)

Michael Lindemberger/Reporter [Bio](#) | [E-mail](#) | [News tips](#)

An upside to the recession? It costs less to build highways.

The Texas Department of Transportation has executed about 160 highway and bridge contracts (and completed four projects) as it tries to spend down the federal stimulus funds it received earlier this year. But with so many construction crews scrambling for jobs, competition for that work is intense. As a result, winning bids have been much lower than expected.

It all adds up to tens of millions of dollars in savings so far, and the the Texas Transportation Commission approved a minute order this morning that will allow TxDOT to build new roads and other projects throughout Texas.

I will have a list of the top projects in North Texas in a few minutes, and will update this post then. The projects will be ranked by priority, and as the savings accrue -- as bids come in under budget -- the department will authorize the projects as it can afford them.