



C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER
GOVERNOR

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CONTACT: Jon Hanian
(208) 334-2100

GOVERNOR NAMES TRANSPORTATION TASK FORCE

(MERIDIAN) – Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter today named a 15-member task force of legislators and private individuals – led by Lieutenant Governor Brad Little – to consider how best to modernize the user-pay fee system for financing maintenance and improvements to Idaho's roads and bridges.

The announcement came as the Governor helped break ground on the \$33.8 million, GARVEE-funded Ten Mile Interchange on Interstate 84 in Meridian. That project is expected to create more than 600 jobs, cost about \$9.8 million less than originally estimated, and ease traffic congestion in the heavily traveled Garrity-to-Meridian corridor of I-84. It should be completed in May 2011.

The Governor's transportation task force was established by Executive Order No. 2009-11 today: <http://bit.ly/TaskForce>. It was a provision of a session-ending agreement with legislative leaders on continuing efforts to address a backlog of road and bridge maintenance, repairs and needed improvements that has grown to hundreds of millions of dollars a year.

The Governor's task force will start meeting in early August. Its meetings will be open to the public. Its goal will be developing recommendations by December 2010 for sustainable road and bridge funding for the next 20 years. Task force members will study everything from fuel tax increases and registration fees to truck fees, targeted transportation-related sales taxes and other alternatives.

"I appreciate the Legislature's willingness to join me in this much-needed work to plan wisely for a safer Idaho with roads and bridges that are up to the people's needs and expectations," Governor Otter said. "We all agree that jobs and prosperity depend on reliable and efficient roads. There is some heavy lifting ahead for this task force, but I'm confident the skills and experience being brought to the effort will yield solutions that reflect what Idaho can live with and grow on for years to come."

Meanwhile, the Legislature has established its own task force to determine by the 2010 legislative session whether the share of funding from the state's 25-cents-per-gallon fuel tax that now goes to the Idaho State Police and the Department of Parks and Recreation should be replaced with some other form of user fee.

Members of the Governor's task force named today are: Lieutenant Governor **Brad Little**, chairman; Senate Transportation Committee Chairman **John McGee** of Caldwell; House Transportation and Defense Committee Chairman **JoAn Wood** of Rigby; Senator **Bert Brackett** of Rogerson; Senator **Shawn Keough** of Sandpoint; Senator **Chuck Winder** of Boise; Senator **Edgar Malepeai** of Pocatello; Representative **Marv Hagedorn** of Meridian; Representative **Dennis Lake** of Blackfoot; Representative **Leon Smith** of Twin Falls; Representative **Bill Killen** of Boise; **Jim Kempton**, president of the Idaho Public Utilities Commission; **Mark Bowen**, chairman of the Boise Metro Chamber of Commerce; Valley County Commissioner **Gordon Cruickshank**; and **Jim Riley**, president of the Intermountain Forest Association.

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