



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

October 15, 2015

Contact:

John Lang, Cullman County Engineer
256-796-1336, jlang@co.cullman.al.us

Terri Reynolds, DRIVE Alabama
205-500-6484, drivealabama@gmail.com

Road & Bridge Program Has Huge Impacts in Cullman County *County Still Faces Uphill Battle in Meeting Infrastructure Needs*

Cullman, Ala. – Cullman County officials are urging citizens to look at the Alabama Transportation and Rehabilitation Investment Program (ATRIP) as an example of how local road and bridge investments can benefit the entire state.

ATRIP was introduced in 2012 as an infrastructure initiative aimed at investing over \$1 billion into Alabama's local roads and bridges. As a result of ATRIP's investment plan, many counties will complete 15 to 20 years of road and bridge projects in a three to four year period.

"We will complete 18 additional infrastructure projects in Cullman County because of ATRIP. There is no way these projects could have been done without this program," said Kenneth Walker, Cullman County Commission Chairman. "But now that the program is coming to an end, we must deal with the remaining road situations without the extra infusion of money coming in from the state."

The accelerated ATRIP investment into local infrastructure helped all of Alabama's 67 counties address critical needs by giving them the resources to rehabilitate, preserve, and improve roads and bridges on county systems—improvements that would otherwise not be possible.

"One such example in Cullman County is County Road 1223," said John Lang, the Cullman County Engineer.

ATRIP invested \$1,034,457.42 (80% federal and 20% local) in roadway maintenance and safety improvements to County Road 1223 in Cullman County. The resurfacing project benefited over 95 homes, 3 churches, and 5 businesses located on the road—not to mention the surrounding communities of West

Point, Battleground, and South Vinemont. In addition to the residential and recreational impacts, the project improved access to 250 acres of timber land and 578 acres of farm land—with combined property values exceeding \$3 million. These upgrades will aid in the movement of goods from the farm to the market.

*****See the attached PDF for additional information on ATRIP's impact in Cullman County*****

While the program has been beneficial to the citizens who utilize the routes receiving ATRIP moneys, county leaders expect other communities in Cullman County will have to go without such improvements due to budget shortfalls.

According to the Association of County Commissions of Alabama (ACCA), most counties are facing this same issue. "For years, we've had to piecemeal together funding packages to help counties keep their heads above water with basic road and bridge maintenance. In order to truly meet Alabama's 21st century mobility needs, we will have to identify a sustainable revenue source for local infrastructure programs," said Sonny Brasfield, ACCA Executive Director.

John Lang said Cullman County has joined a statewide coalition of county engineers, county commissioners, community leaders, and citizens known as **DRIVE Alabama** (Developing a Road and Infrastructure Vision for Everyone in Alabama) in hopes of bringing more statewide attention to the limited funding available to support Alabama's growing infrastructure needs.

"With our current financial resources almost exclusively going to maintenance activities, Cullman County is situated like most Alabama counties. The amount of money needed to improve and preserve the county's road and bridge network is 300% higher than what is currently available to perform basic maintenance. We simply don't have the resources to complete all the infrastructure work that needs to be done," said Lang.

#

*DRIVE Alabama is a coalition of community leaders and citizens led by county engineers from Alabama's 67 counties speaking in **one voice** to bring attention to the growing infrastructure needs across the state of Alabama. The www.drivealabama.org website will officially launch on November 16, 2016. In the meantime, please follow the **DRIVE Alabama** campaign via [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).*

tar