



## **Governor Chris Christie, NJDOT Commissioner Jamie Fox Praise \$2.3 Billion NJ Turnpike Infrastructure Investment Project**

### *Expansion Brings NJ Turnpike to Nearly Three Times Its Original Capacity*

CRANBURY TOWNSHIP, Oct. 24, 2014 – Governor Chris Christie joined Department of Transportation Commissioner Jamie Fox and New Jersey Turnpike Authority officials today for the opening of the largest capacity expansion in the 62-year history of the New Jersey Turnpike. Completed on-time and under-budget, the New Jersey Turnpike widening between Interchanges 6 and 9 doubles capacity through most of a congested, 35-mile corridor in Burlington, Mercer and Middlesex counties. It will begin opening to traffic this weekend.

“New Jersey’s transportation network has always been one of our greatest competitive advantages,” said Governor Christie. “The opening of the Turnpike more than six decades ago addressed a pent-up need for additional highway capacity in our state and helped fuel the longest period of economic growth in New Jersey’s history. With the new lanes from 6 to 9, we are providing capacity New Jersey needs to prosper in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.”

“For many years, commuters and truckers have lived with near-daily delays through this economically vital corridor,” said Commissioner Fox, who is also chairman of the NJTA Board of Commissioners. “We understand the costs associated with those delays, and we understand the frustrations felt by the drivers who endure them. This project should serve notice that, given the resources, New Jersey is able to design and deliver solutions to its most pressing transportation challenges.”

The Widening Program created a three-lane Outer Roadway in each direction over the 25 miles between Interchange 6 in Mansfield Township, Burlington County, and Interchange 8A in Monroe Township, Middlesex County. It also added one lane to the existing Outer Roadways between Interchange 8A and Interchange 9 in East Brunswick, Middlesex County.

The addition of 170 lane miles makes the 6 to 9 Widening Program the largest capacity expansion in the 62-year history of the New Jersey Turnpike. During the peak of construction, the Turnpike Widening ranked as the largest active roadway project in the Western Hemisphere.

In addition to the new lanes, the Program involved building a new Interchange 8 toll plaza; widening the Interchange 7A toll plaza; building or modifying 102 bridges and culverts; installing four miles of noise barrier and 123 miles of guard rail; relocating 17 miles of

petroleum pipeline; erecting 140 over-the-road sign structures; and resurfacing about 150 lane miles of existing roadway.

The original budget was \$2.5 billion. The final cost is expected to be around \$2.3 billion. The savings, which can be attributed to management efficiencies and to market conditions in the construction industry at the time when the contracts were bid, allowed the Turnpike Authority to expand the scope of its 10-year, \$7 billion capital program without increasing the cost. Improvements like the ongoing widening of the Garden State Parkway between milepost 35 in Egg Harbor Township, Atlantic County, and milepost 63 in Stafford Township, Ocean County, were added to the capital program because the Turnpike Widening and other capital projects cost less than projected.

The bonds sold to pay for the Turnpike Widening are being repaid with revenue generated by a two-phase toll increase that was adopted in 2008 and has been in full effect since 2012. There are no federal or state tax dollars involved.

Construction of the Widening Program began in July 2009. Thirty-one construction contracts were awarded. In all, 17 general contractors, five construction management groups, 21 utility companies and 327 subcontractors have been involved. More than 1,000 workers were employed on the Widening every day during the peak of construction.

When the Turnpike opened 62 years ago, it was 118 miles long and four lanes wide for a total of 472 lane miles. With this widening complete, the Turnpike now has nearly three times the capacity it had then. The roadway today is 148 miles long and up to 14 lanes wide for a total of 1,320 lane miles.

“When the Turnpike opened, the Saturday Evening Post called it, ‘The greatest piece of highway ever built,’ but it was practically a country road compared to today,” said NJTA Executive Director Joseph W. Mrozek. “The 6 to 9 Widening Program has often been described as the centerpiece of our 10-year Capital Program and it truly is just that. These improvements bring our roadway into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and provide a cost-effective and efficient way for our customers to have enhanced mobility as we meet the transportation challenges of a new generation of motorists.”

The new lanes were finished and opened to drivers in May. At that time, the existing Inner Roadways were closed for resurfacing and repairs to bridge decks and median barriers. That work is now complete. The northbound lanes are scheduled to open this weekend. The work to prepare the roadway for the opening will begin Saturday night. The lanes should open to traffic early in the day Sunday. The process is scheduled to be repeated on the southbound side next weekend.

The work required to open the completed lanes to traffic is weather-dependent. Rain could force an adjustment to the schedule.