

Feb. 17, 2010

Governor Rendell Says Federal Recovery Act Having Profound Impact in PA

Marks First Anniversary with Bridge Opening, Town Hall Meeting, Annual Report

Harrisburg – The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act has significantly benefitted Pennsylvania and its residents by putting people to work and stimulating economic growth, Governor Edward G. Rendell said today during two events marking the first anniversary of the Recovery Act.

“It’s bad enough that 4,300 Pennsylvanians lost their jobs last fall, but there is absolutely no dispute that without Recovery funds, three times the number of families would have suffered a loss of income,” Governor Rendell said during a town hall meeting at Shippensburg University that was linked by live videoconference to hundreds of students, faculty and community leaders at the University of Pittsburgh and state universities at East Stroudsburg, Kutztown, West Chester, and Edinboro.

He noted that Pennsylvania lost 77,000 jobs in the first quarter of 2009, before Recovery Act funding was available.

“The stimulus bill included a critical infusion of federal funds that helped nearly every state avoid massive layoffs,” the Governor said. “Without those funds, we would have faced some very tough choices: close prisons and let thousands of offenders go free; or cut funding to public schools by 50 percent and, as a result, lay off more than 100,000 school employees; or if we didn’t have the \$2 billion state fiscal relief that stimulus provided, we would have had to lay off 37,000 state employees – half our workforce – to balance the budget.

“Because our economy is not yet out of the woods, I think the best and proven strategy to get more people to work and American employers humming again is to increase America’s investment in infrastructure,” the Governor said.

Earlier in the day, Governor Rendell visited a completed infrastructure project in Cumberland County. He held an opening ceremony at the new Route 34 bridge in North Middleton Township, where he and Vice President Joseph Biden visited twice in 2009 to showcase the need and

impact of Recovery Act funding.

Until Recovery Act funds became available, PennDOT did not have the resources needed to immediately replace the nearly 80-year-old structurally deficient bridge used by nearly 5,000 vehicles a day and linking Carlisle with Perry County.

"Pennsylvania has received more than a billion dollars in federal funds for infrastructure through the Recovery Act, and these dollars are putting Pennsylvanians back to work," Governor Rendell said. "Last fall before the road construction season slowed due to weather, stimulus-funded road and bridge projects were directly employing more than 11,000 Pennsylvanians.

"Stimulus allowed the contractors and subcontractors that worked on this project to recall 38 employees from layoff, add five new employees and one new part-time employee. That put bread on the table of these workers and their families."

The bridge project also created indirect jobs supplying material that included: 105 tons of asphalt, 67 tons of aggregate, more than 85,000 pounds of rebar steel, 800 cubic yards of concrete, 20, 94-foot-long concrete beams and 85 tons of backfill. The project was finished in November, nearly five months ahead of schedule.

Across Pennsylvania, 476 bridges will be repaired or replaced and 872 miles of roadway – longer than the distance between Philadelphia and Chicago – will be repaved through the Recovery Act. More than 90 projects are already completed and all but one are under contract.

"On top of road and bridge work, Recovery Act funds for water and sewer projects will put more than 5,000 people to work this year and improve water systems serving more than 100,000 homes.

"Since the Recovery Act was passed, Pennsylvania companies and communities have received more than \$800 million for green energy projects. These funds are on top of the more than \$900 million in state funds spent to help grow this sector in the past seven years," the Governor said. "As a result, according to the Pew Center, Pennsylvania ranks third for growth of green jobs just behind the powerhouse energy states of Texas and California.

"All of these projects are employing people who otherwise might have been laid off, giving them the resources to spread through our stalled economy," Governor Rendell said. "These projects are purchasing

materials that mean the stimulus effect spreads even further. And when completed, these projects leave long-lasting assets and better transportation links for communities. These are the building blocks for economic recovery and the result of President Obama's Recovery Act.

"That's what the stimulus is really about: re-employing hardworking citizens, getting our economy back on sound footing, and expanding the critical sectors of our economy that we know will bring short- and long-term growth and recovery."

To learn more about the Recovery Act impact in Pennsylvania and read the new Annual Report, visit www.recovery.pa.gov.

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