



## **Governor Scott Kicks Off Wekiva Parkway Project**

*-Project will create 35,000 Jobs for Florida Families-*

**SEMINOLE COUNTY, FL** – Governor Rick Scott today joined state and local officials for the Wekiva Parkway kick-off event, marking the partnership to complete the beltway around Central Florida, while protecting Florida’s environment. The project will create an estimated 35,000 jobs.

The \$1.5 billion Wekiva Parkway is a collaborative effort between the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and the Orlando-Orange County Expressway Authority (OOCEA). The 25-mile toll road will make travel easier and more convenient through Lake, Orange and Seminole counties, and will help relieve congestion on US Highway 441 and State Road (SR) 46.

**Governor Scott said, “The Wekiva Parkway will create jobs for Florida families while also protecting our natural resources for future generations. Transportation projects like the Wekiva increase mobility and enhance the quality of life for the residents of this region.”**

The completion of the beltway will improve travel to the area’s world-renown tourist destinations and other major employment centers. Currently Central Florida’s beltway consists of approximately 87 miles of SR 429 (Daniel Webster Western Beltway), SR 414 (John Land Apopka Expressway) and SR 417 (Central Florida GreeneWay).

**FDOT Secretary Ananth Prasad said, “The Wekiva Parkway will be a true game-changer for the entire Central Florida region. By working together, we are able to make the long-sought vision of completing the beltway around metropolitan Orlando a reality.”**

Based on years of input from thousands of citizens, business owners, environmentalists and agency officials, the parkway is specifically designed help to protect the Wekiva River Basin, home to an Outstanding Florida Water. Authorized by the 2004 Wekiva Parkway & Protection Act, parkway development has included conserving more than 3,400 acres of land.

The parkway will include several wildlife bridges, and will be largely elevated to allow animals to move more easily and safely between habitats in the Wekiwa (correct spelling) Springs State Park, Rock Springs Run Reserve, Seminole State Forest and Lower Wekiva River Preserve.

The parkway is also expected to greatly benefit the region’s economy. More than 35,000 Floridians could get jobs related to the parkway’s design and construction over the next eight years. (That estimate uses formulas from the *Federal Highway Administration Employment Impacts of Highway Infrastructure Investment* - Updated March 2010.)

(more)

**Expressway Authority Chairman Walter Ketcham said, “It is truly exciting to be moving forward on the Wekiva Parkway, after decades of painstaking planning and support for this critical transportation project. This landmark project will bring the community a much-needed economic boost, and help address the travel needs of Central Florida and the state as a whole.”**

The Wekiva Parkway is being developed in sections, with the entire roadway expected to be open to traffic in 2021. FDOT is developing the parkway in Lake and Seminole counties. The department is also making non-tolled improvements to SR 46 and relocating part of County Road 46A out of the Seminole State Forest to improve habitat connectivity. The Expressway Authority is designing and building the portions in Orange County, as well as a small section in Lake County.

The Wekiva Parkway will be the first expressway built in Central Florida featuring all-electronic tolling for the greatest customer convenience and to keep traffic moving. Motorists will need a SUNPass or E-PASS transponder to use the parkway.

For more information on the Wekiva Parkway, please visit the project website at:  
<http://wekivaparkway.com/>