

Exit Strategy: I-85 Exit Ramp Innovations Demonstrated

Engineers and consultants from the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Highways for LIFE (HfL) program and the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) partnered to construct an exit ramp using technologies intended specifically to prevent the loss of valuable preconstruction time. Using Design/Build contracting, prefabricated bridge elements, and performance incentives to contractors, GDOT is leveraging planning and intelligent transportation systems (ITS) to speed construction and stretch its dollars farther than ever before on this 80.9 million-dollar project.

On May 1st, 2008, a Product Demonstration Showcase was conducted in West Point, GA, to share the state's use of several combined technologies on a new I-85 exit ramp near the Alabama border. GDOT engineers gave detailed presentations to approximately 50 attendees, combined with a field trip to the site, to highlight the benefits of using and combining the technologies.

Design/Build technology, already familiar to many states, involves contracting both design and construction to a single builder, which is cheaper and allows both processes to continue simultaneously. Using prefabricated elements for the ramp, rather than custom design and construction, has hastened the design and implementation. GDOT also created incentives for the contractor, based largely on crash cleanup and safety, in order to minimize congestion and the project's overall intrusiveness on normal highway activity. Speed band monitoring was also demonstrated during the presentation on a live web link. By using these technologies, GDOT engineers are expecting to save between 12 and 18 months total construction time. One participant from a neighboring state, when asked about the event, called it "very effective...[it] answered a lot of questions."

Learn more about these cost saving innovations by visiting: www.pdshowcase.org, <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/hfl/innovator/issue06.cfm> or email pdshowcase@ce.ufl.edu.