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PALM BAY/BREVARD COUNTY EVENTS MARK MILESTONES FOR ST. JOHNS HERITAGE PARKWAY

BREVARD COUNTY, Fla. -- The City of Palm Bay and Brevard County will hold a joint ribbon-cutting/ground-breaking ceremony beginning at 4 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 13, to mark the completion of Phase I and the start of Phase II construction of the St. Johns Heritage Parkway.

Two years after construction began, the City of Palm Bay and its partners are preparing to open the new parkway, a critical north-south evacuation route that is expected to ease traffic congestion on the northwest side of the city. The ribbon-cutting/ground-breaking will take place at the intersection of the Parkway with the west end of Emerson Drive. This is also where Brevard County will break ground for Phase II of the project, which will extend the roadway to U.S. 192. As the county builds this phase of the Parkway, the city will also construct the portion of the Parkway from Emerson Drive north to city Limits, which will fully connect both the city and county phases of the roadway.

The St. Johns Heritage Parkway acts as beltway around I-95 providing for a 13,000 interstate trip reduction, reducing local traffic and commercial traffic conflicts on the interstate system. The project connects employees with employers, including several Fortune 500 federal contractors. The proposed roadway promotes long term job creation with new or improved access to 1,400 acres of vacant mixed-use property. In addition, the project allows for a new north-south arterial roadway which connects to several east-west arterial roadways that act as evacuation routes for coastal high hazard areas and for other potential man-made or natural disasters.

Palm Bay's phase of the St. Johns Heritage Parkway is a \$12.1 million investment using a combination of federal funds, a grant from the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity and local transportation impact fees. Phase one is approximately 2.5 miles beginning at the west end of Malabar Road near Heritage High School and ending at Emerson Drive. There are two connections — one at Emerson and another at Pace Drive, both of which were extended to intersect with the Parkway.

"We are so excited to finally be opening the parkway," said Mayor William Capote. "This road not only serves as a catalyst for future growth, it is also going to be a critical evacuation route and will help ease a lot of the traffic issues we have on this side of the city. I know the residents I've spoken with are thrilled it's finally here."

The city phase of the Parkway was a design-build project with Community Asphalt as the primary contractor and Keith & Schnars as its design team partner. The Parkway design was based off of the 100 percent concept plans provided by B.S.E Consultants. Target Engineering performed the project administration, construction engineering and inspection services for the city.

The Brevard County portion (Phase II) consists of two projects, one beginning where Palm Bay's construction ends at the city limits and runs north to US 192, approximately 3.1 miles. The total construction cost including rights of way acquisition and mitigation is just over \$17 million. Construction will begin in early 2015 and last 720 days. The second project begins at US 192 and runs approximately 2.196 miles north to the proposed Ellis/I-95 interchange. The total construction cost for Phase II is approximately \$13 million.

"This road has been over 20 years in the making and to see this first section open is very exciting," Brevard County Commissioner Andy Anderson said. "I have been committed to seeing this critical route get built since my first day in office and as we break ground on the county portion, I am thrilled about the positive impacts this road will have on this community, its residents and its businesses once the road is complete."

Future expansion plans will have the parkway wrapping around the southern portion of Brevard County starting at a new I-95 interchange proposed at Ellis Road near Melbourne and West Melbourne and ending at another new interchange near Palm Bay's southern city limit. Funding for the southern interchange is in the Florida Department of Transportation's five year work plan and construction is expected to begin in 2016. Palm Bay is currently working with the landowners in this area for the design and construction of the south parkway and interchange access roads.

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Brevard County Board of County Commissioners

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