

## Officials mark finish of I-95 fifth-lane (The News Journal)

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State leaders celebrate, but say more road work needed in Del.

By GINGER GIBSON

The News Journal

Delaware has made progress in easing its traffic congestion, but much work still is needed to improve roads and transit systems, state officials said Tuesday while celebrating the completion of the I-95 fifth-lane project.

But even as they cheered the completion of one project, officials used the gathering at the I-95 rest area to play off the National Governors Association meeting -- held in Philadelphia earlier in the day -- to make their case that more funding is needed for road construction in the state. On hand to mark the completion was Gov. Ruth Ann Minner, U.S. Sen. Tom Carper and U.S. Rep. Mike Castle; each remarked on the need to continue to bring funds to the state for the roads.

DelDOT Secretary Carolann Wicks said the completion of the \$55 million project, which added a fifth lane to I-95 starting at Christiana Mall and extending north four miles, is important in reducing traffic and keeping infrastructure projects moving.

"This roadway remains the Main Street of the East Coast," Wicks said.

Castle and Carper said they are working to bring federal funds to Delaware and ensure roads remain a top priority. Those funds can't be just for roads, Carper said, they must also be put toward capacity-increasing rail and transit projects.

Castle said expansions and improvements to the I-95 corridor benefit more than just Delawareans because so many out-of-state travelers and freight travel the span. "It's of national interest," Castle said.

Minner said state roads and projects such as redesigning the I-95 toll plaza to allow high-speed transactions must remain at the forefront.

The governor, who opted not to attend the NGA's meeting with President-elect Barack Obama, said she wanted to let Markell "start his term" by representing Delaware at the meeting.

"I decided being in Delaware was more important," Minner said.

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