



**HIGHWAY 55**

CORRIDOR COALITION

*Preserving the 55 Corridor from I-494 to Annandale, Minnesota*

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**--- NEWS RELEASE ---**

**Possible Additional Federal Funding for TH 55 in Federal Transportation Bill**

Representatives of the TH 55 Corridor Coalition, including Karla Heeter, Wright County Commissioner; Gary Erickson, Hennepin County Assistant Administrator; and Brad Larson, SRF Consulting Group, Inc. were in Washington, D.C., June 7-9, 2005 to thank their congressman for their past support in securing \$1.5 Million in federal funding and urge their continued support for an additional \$5 Million. The group met with Senators Norm Coleman and Mark Dayton and Congressmen Mark Kennedy and Jim Ramstad and their staffs.

The timing of the visit could not have been better. The House and Senate began meeting in Conference Committee on Wednesday, June 9, 2005 to finalize the 6 year reauthorization of the Federal Transportation Bill. Thanks to the efforts of Congressmen Kennedy with support from Congressman Jim Ramstad the House version of the bill contains \$5 Million in authorization for TH 55. In the meetings with Senator Coleman and Dayton, both expressed strong support for keeping the \$5 Million in the final bill.

With Trunk Highway 55 serving many fast-growing communities, including Plymouth, Rockford, and Buffalo, the Highway 55 Corridor Coalition has focused its pursuit on special federal appropriations. These appropriations, known as High Priority Projects (HPP) are a strategic approach of leveraging local monies with federal dollars to address critical mobility and safety needs for the corridor. In the past, HPP funding has assisted the TH 55 Corridor Coalition in developing official maps to preserve right-of-way and conducting preliminary engineering and environmental studies to better ready the corridor for future improvements should funding become available.

Congressman Kennedy feels strongly about the need to improve TH 55 and has been instrumental in the coalition's efforts to secure funding for the corridor. The current effort to secure \$5 Million in federal dollars, if successful, could be available as early as October 1, 2005 if the transportation bill is approved.