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**TDOT Media Advisory
*Preliminary Work Begins on Knoxville Beltway Project***

Nashville, Tenn.--In an effort to begin moving forward on the Knoxville Beltway project, the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) will be conducting some preliminary site research work in Knox County and surrounding areas impacted by the selected corridor.

The purpose of this announcement is to alert the public to the beginning of the process. In the next few weeks survey crews will begin gathering the data to supplement aerial photography.

On November 10, 2003, TDOT Commissioner Gerald Nicely announced that the Department would proceed with SR-475 commonly known as the Knoxville Beltway Orange Route.

As part of that decision, TDOT will include local government officials, special interest groups, and the public in the process known as Context Sensitive Solutions. The process will involve the design of the project with input from engineers and stakeholders alike.

"The first step of this process will involve gathering information about the area within the corridor in which the roadway will be located," said TDOT Commissioner Gerald Nicely. "We have already conducted aerial photography surveys."

The next step will be to supplement the aerial photographs with information provided by ground surveys which will investigate property lines, underground utilities, detailed stream information, cave locations, and more.

All this data will be combined into comprehensive maps of the corridor. Engineers and stakeholder groups will use these maps as a basis for preliminary design, and analysis.

"Also, stakeholder groups are being formed," Nicely added. "In addition to the stakeholder meetings, local public meetings will be held at various locations along the route as the project progresses. It is our intent to involve and inform the public through all phases of this very important project."

More information on the Knoxville Beltway project is available on the TDOT web site at www.tennessee.gov/tdot.

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