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# South Florida Sun-Sentinel.com

## Agreement paves way for I-595 construction project to begin

### Florida Department of Transportation signs contract with Spanish firm

By Michael Turnbell

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The \$1.2 billion project to rebuild Interstate 595 will soon be under way.

Gov. Charlie Crist on Thursday announced that the Florida Department of Transportation has signed an agreement with ACS Infrastructure Development Inc., a Spanish construction conglomerate.

The project, which could be complete by 2014, it will be Florida's first public-private road deal. It will provide South Florida with a significant economic boost, pumping up to \$1 million a day into the economy.

"Two years ago, I challenged the Florida Department of Transportation to accelerate construction projects so that we could relieve traffic congestion in South Florida, and they have met the challenge," Crist said. "This project will also boost the economy by getting shovels in the dirt and supporting more than 34,000 jobs in the region."

The actual construction contract is \$1.2 billion, the figure state officials are relying on to estimate the 30,000-plus jobs the job is expected to create. The total project cost of \$1.79 billion includes the cost of maintaining the highway over 30 years once the construction is finished in 2014.

While I-595 is being rebuilt, drivers will have to navigate barricades, alternate routes and lane closures. When finished, the new highway will feature reversible express lanes for long-distance commuters, new entrance and exit ramps, and a safer, less confusing Florida's Turnpike interchange.

Some off-road work, including relocating utility lines, could begin this spring. State transportation officials plan a series of public meetings over the next several months to inform the public on the project.

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