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## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **HARRIS COUNTY SAVES \$110 MILLION ON EIGHT LARGE CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTS**

*Economy Pushes Project Costs More Than 33% Below Estimates*

Harris County Commissioners Court saved taxpayers approximately \$110 million Tuesday morning, when it approved a series of major construction programs for far less than originally estimated.

The court approved bids on \$222 million in projects ranging from construction of portions of the Sam Houston Tollway East to a new Jury Assembly Building in downtown Houston. County officials originally estimated the projects would cost as much as \$332 million, but large savings on construction materials and a more competitive construction environment pushed costs down for taxpayers, county officials said.

“While no one hopes for a down economy, it does create an opportunity for Harris County to accomplish many of our more expensive long-term projects for far less money than we might otherwise be able to,” said Harris County Judge Ed Emmett. “It also has the added benefit of keeping Harris County residents working and getting our traffic moving.”

Rich Elwood, Harris County’s deputy director of construction programs, said most of the savings come from greater competition among construction companies vying for county work.

“The competition is stiffer,” Elwood said. “There are more contractors out there bidding, which makes for a more advantageous environment for the county. It’s a win-win situation. Contractors keep working, and taxpayers are getting a break.”

Taxpayers saved at least \$1 million on each of the eight projects approved by Commissioners Court on Tuesday, with the largest savings coming in at \$31.6 million on construction of part of the Sam Houston Tollway East.