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## Entire U.S. 31 corridor now under contract

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— Every segment of the 13.1-mile, U.S. 31 Kokomo Corridor is now officially under construction.

This week, the Indiana Department of Transportation awarded a \$30.8 million contract to build the northern terminus of the project — the segment where the new bypass reconnects with the current U.S. 31, just north of Kokomo.

Primco Inc., Fort Wayne, was the low bidder on the contract, which includes 2.3 miles of roadway, four bridges and a partial diamond interchange at 400 North.

Work on Contract 7 is expected to be completed by November 2013, state officials said.

The entire U.S. 31 Kokomo Corridor project is also expected to be finished around the same time, two years ahead of when state officials originally planned to complete the project.

State officials had more good news on the Kokomo Corridor last month, when they announced that the project, once expected to cost \$345 million, will probably cost about \$160 million when complete.

The Kokomo Corridor will be the first completed of three major upgrades along U.S. 31, state officials announced last month.

In 2014, the 20-mile upgrade of U.S. 31 through St. Joseph and Marshall counties will open, at a total cost of about \$220 million. The road, 15 miles of which is on new terrain, runs from the junction with U.S. 30 to the Indiana Toll Road.

And in 2015, the most expensive portion of the project will be finished, between Ind. 38 and I-465 through Hamilton County.

Earlier this year, Gov. Mitch Daniels announced a new public/private partnership would allow the estimated \$436 million cost of upgrading U.S. 31 in Hamilton County to be raised from private capital.

The state will repay that cost over the next eight to 10 years, allowing the work to be completed by 2015. Original estimates had the Hamilton County portion being completed in 2018.

Contract 7 is the final segment of the Kokomo Corridor to be awarded. Earlier this month, INDOT officials awarded the contract for the southern terminus of the project, which extends into northern Tipton County.

This will be the third contract awarded on the Kokomo bypass to Primco, which has already built interchanges at Boulevard and Ind. 26, along with the road realignments, bridges and other work connected with those projects.

For each contract, Primco has been the lowest of several bidders. The state is using money from the lease of the Indiana Toll Road to pay most of the cost of the Kokomo projects.

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