

Local Bond Elections Mean Millions of Dollars in Construction Contracting Opportunities

Things are about to heat up for the construction industry in Texas.

Texas voters approved more than three-dozen of the 45 bond issues on local ballots on November 8 and most of them include construction projects, from building new schools and law enforcement centers to transporta-

tion proposals involving road and bridge projects. Overall, \$4.8 billion of the bond projects valued at nearly \$5 billion gained voter approval, creating immediate contracting opportunities worth millions of dollars for construction companies of every size and type throughout the state.

Among the statewide bond issues were

18 successful school referendums where contracting opportunities will be for construction of new schools, athletic facilities and campus-wide renovations. Many city construction proposals include road and street projects, while county bond issues are dominated by public safety projects such as law enforcement centers and new

Here are some examples of bond packages that passed in the state that will result in contracts for private-sector construction firms:

City of Austin

A \$720 million transportation bond proposal was passed in the state's capital city, which quadruples the size of any previous transportation bond approved in the city's history. Bond proceeds will include \$482 million for a variety of improvements to nine major city corridor streets and \$137 million for expansion of the city's bike and trail system, sidewalks and transit. Another \$101 million will be dedicated to major roads on the densely-populated west side of the city.

City of Amarillo

Only two of the seven propositions on the Amarillo ballot were passed, but both are construction-related. An \$89.5 million proposal relating to streets and traffic projects passed, nearly half of which will be dedicated to street reconstruction. A \$20.1 million public safety proposition that passed will result in the construction of two new fire stations and improvements to current public safety facilities.

Community Colleges

Two Texas community colleges held successful bond referendums, Del Mar College and Ranger College. Del Mar's \$13 million bond issue includes adding a new south side campus in Corpus Christi that will have three new buildings. At Ranger College, a successful \$10 million bond vote will pay for replacement of four dormitory facilities and upgrades to the existing cafeteria.

Hays County

Voters approved two bond proposals. Proposition 1 relates to public safety and will provide for expanding and remodeling of the current county jail at a cost of \$62.4 million. Another \$44 million will be dedicated toward a new law enforcement center and Emergency Operations Center/911 facility. Proposition two will bring \$131.4 million to the table for county transportation needs, including \$98.9 million to address more than two-dozen road projects.

Smithville ISD

The bond proposition includes construction of a new junior high school and a new multipurpose athletic complex to support physical education, football, track, soccer, band and special events.

Bosque County

Bond proceeds will fund a new \$9.8 million law enforcement center/jail.

San Antonio ISD

Campus renovations dominate the use of proceeds from this successful bond vote. There will be extensive renovations at 13 schools, including seven high school campuses, four middle school and two elementary school campuses.

City of Huntsville

Two of the three propositions that passed will result in construction projects, including \$32 million for a public safety facility to house both the police headquarters and a fire station and \$24 million for a new City Service Center and renovation of the City Hall.

McCulloch County

A new county jail facility will be constructed at a cost of \$9.9 million.

Most public officials report that they intend to jump-start projects as quickly as they possibly can. While the bonds are being funded, many have plans to move forward with solicitation documents so that no time is lost. Most of the contracts to be offered will extend over multiple years. Things are about to get busy in Texas and private-sector construction firms interested in competing for work in any region of the state should be making inquiries about the process immediately.



Mary Scott Nabers is President and CEO of Strategic Partnerships Inc., a business development company specializing in government contracting and procurement consulting throughout the U.S.