

## Obama plans vast public works projects

Targets infrastructure — roads, schools, energy — to spur economy

**The Associated Press**

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CHICAGO - President-elect Barack Obama said Saturday he's asked his economic team for a recovery plan that saves or creates more than 2 million jobs, makes public buildings more energy-efficient and invests in the country's roads and schools.

"We won't just throw money at the problem," Obama said in his weekly radio address and Internet video. "We'll measure progress by the reforms we make and the results we achieve — by the jobs we create, by the energy we save, by whether America is more competitive in the world."

Obama's remarks come after the Labor Department announced Friday that employers cut 533,000 jobs in November, the most in 34 years.

Obama said his plan would put millions of people to work by "making the single largest new investment in our national infrastructure since the creation of the federal highway system in the 1950s."

### Project pitches

State transportation officials on Friday said they have compiled a **list of more than 5,000 road and bridge projects that could be started quickly**. They want Congress to include the projects in an economic recovery bill that could total as much as \$500 billion.

"If we're given resources through the economic recovery bill that allows states to proceed with jump-start investment like we're talking about, we'll be able to put up to 1.8 million Americans back to work," said John Horsley, executive director of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials.

Supporters of such public works spending say it is a surer way to create jobs than, for example, the \$600 to \$1,200 tax rebate checks sent out to individuals and couples this year, and can provide lasting economic benefits.

Skeptics say infrastructure spending is relatively slow-acting and its effects will not be fully felt until the economy is already on the rebound.

**The transportation projects are mostly repairs and upgrades to existing roads and bridges and are considered "ready to go" because they could be under contract within 180 days, Horsley said.**

"It's the type of stuff that you can get out the door quickly," he said.

### Schools, Internet

In his weekly address, Obama also proposed installing energy-saving light bulbs and **replace old heating systems in federal buildings** to cut costs and create jobs.

School buildings would get an upgrade, too.

"Because to help our children compete in a 21st century economy, we need to send them to 21st century schools," Obama said.

As a part of the plan, Obama said he wants to expand Internet access in communities. Hospitals also should be connected to each other online.

"Here, in the country that invented the Internet, every child should have the chance to get online," he said.

Obama said he would announce other details of the economic recovery plan in the coming weeks. He said he'd work with Congress to pass the initiative when lawmakers reconvene in January.