

# Region

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SECTION C

## STTA upgrade to include interchange for airport

■ The \$31M. plan would improve the airport terminal and A.C. Expressway.

By THOMAS BARLAS  
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The region's primary airport and one of its two major toll roads could undergo more than \$31 million worth of upgrades this year, work that includes a new interchange and a remodeled terminal building.

In all, the South Jersey Transportation Authority, or STTA, would spend more than \$21.3 million on Atlantic City Expressway projects, and another \$10.2 million on Atlantic City International Airport proposals.

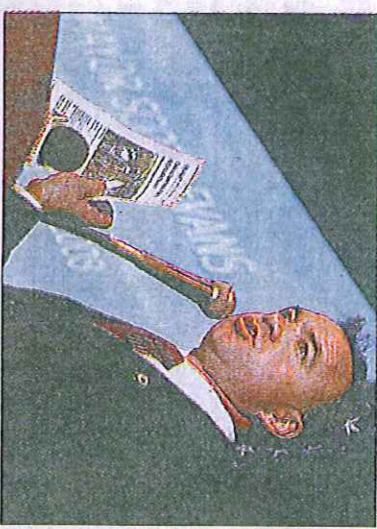
One of the primary projects as outlined in STTA's 2008 capital budget, which was adopted Tuesday, is construction of a full interchange on the expressway at Route 50 — a project that has been discussed for decades.

The work — estimated to cost about \$7.7 million — would begin in the fall, according to Samuel L. Donelson, the STTA's chief engineer.

Currently, only eastbound traffic can exit the expressway onto Route 50, and driving coming off Route 50 can only enter the expressway's westbound lane.

Officials in Harbor Egg Harbor City contend a full interchange could lead to new commercial and residential development in their municipality. Atlantic County officials said a full interchange at the expressway and Route 50 could draw some traffic away

□ See STTA, Page C3



Atlantic City Mayor Scott Evans addresses business leaders in his unofficial State of the City address Tuesday. The official talk comes at the next City Council meeting, and Evans says it will be focused on the budget.

## Evans tells business leaders A.C. 'is at a turning point'

■ The mayor says he wants to work on a friendly relationship with state agencies such as the CRDA.

By MICHAEL CLARK  
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ATLANTIC CITY — Mayor Scott Evans spoke of the city's imminent metamorphosis during his unofficial State of the City address to the business community Tuesday, promoting a better partnership with the state to embrace a transformation in casino development and promising creative solutions to avoid a negative change in taxes from the city's recent property reevaluation.

"Atlantic City is at a turning point," he told a full ballroom at Resorts Atlantic City on Tuesday afternoon. "This can be the crown jewel of the East Coast."

Evans was appointed to the mayor's seat Nov. 21 to replace former Mayor Bob Levy, who resigned in October. He acknowledged Tuesday that his time as mayor has been hectic thus far and admitted he's been overwhelmed by some of the daily challenges the position presents.

□ See Evans, Page C3

STTA also plans to repave about 30 miles of the expressway, install new signs and do its bi-annual inspection of all expressway bridges.

And, funding is also in place to redesign the entrances and exits to the expressway's Frank S. Farley Service Plaza. The project would eliminate the existing confusing ramp system. The plaza's parking lot would also be paved.

At the airport in Egg Harbor Township, the terminal would

get new flooring, ceilings, lighting and other customer amenities, along with the addition of an escalator to take travelers directly to the baggage-claim area. That would also improve customers' movement through the terminal.

STTA has already moved its baggage-screening equipment out of the terminal's concourse and into a new \$7.2 million baggage-screening facility.

The agency will create more travel space in the terminal when existing car-rental company booths are moved to a 1,400-space parking garage scheduled to open in May.

The capital budget also allocates funding related to the terminal's expansion, along with upgraded security cameras.

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