

## **NTR's National Toll Roads (a consortium member of CRG) Announces Dublin to Cork Motorway Opening**

Friday, 28<sup>th</sup> May 2010: An Taoiseach, Mr Brian Cowen, TD, will open the final section of the M8 Dublin to Cork motorway today (28<sup>th</sup> May 2010). The new wishbone-shaped 41km **M7/M8 Portlaoise to Cullahill / Castletown PPP Motorway Scheme**, costing €491 million, was completed four months ahead of schedule in a PPP partnership between the National Roads Authority and Celtic Roads Group (Portlaoise) Ltd. It will cut up to 45 minutes off the 238km journey from Dublin to Cork at peak times as it provides a motorway / dual carriageway link between both cities. It is also a significant section of the M7 motorway link between Dublin and Limerick; it is anticipated that the remaining two sections of the M7 towards Limerick will be completed by the end of this year. **The M7/M8 motorway will open to traffic at approx. 4pm today, Friday 28<sup>th</sup> May.**

**Opening the new Motorway An Taoiseach, Mr. Brian Cowen, T.D.** said “Improving road infrastructure between and within regions will contribute towards the competitiveness of the area and foster more balanced regional development. In particular, the resulting safer and improved journey times will have a very positive impact on the economy by making the Midlands, South West and Midwest more accessible and attractive for inward foreign investment.”

**Speaking at the official opening, Mr Peter Malone, Chairman of the National Roads Authority** said “The completion of the M7/M8 Portlaoise to Cullahill/Castletown heralds another major achievement for Ireland. The NRA, the Irish Government, local authorities and the construction community have delivered another major national milestone by connecting Cork to Dublin via motorway. This opening removes historical bottlenecks and improves road safety on both the Dublin to Limerick route and Dublin to Cork route. Additionally, this completion links two significant centres of commerce and tourism together via motorway that will assist in fostering economic growth for small and large businesses looking to support employment into the future.”

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**Kyran Hurley, Chairman of Celtic Roads Group (Portlaoise) Ltd (CRG) and Managing Director National Toll Roads** said “The opening of this section of the motorway is a great achievement for CRG Portlaoise, the company which brought together the extensive expertise of NTR, BAM PPP and Iridium. This is the third concession project opened by the company and brings to almost 500 lane kilometres, the amount of national primary route under CRG management. The project has been delivered almost 4 months ahead of schedule and the effort of BAM contractors and Dragados as the design and construction contractor has made this possible. Midlink will fulfil the operation and maintenance services for CRG during the contract.”

The capital investment is €491 million, comprising both private sector and Exchequer funding under the National Development Plan and Transport 21. The preliminary design was part funded by the European Union from the Trans-European Transport (TEN-T) Networks budget. The PPP company who won the contract to design, build and operate the motorway is Celtic Roads Group (Portlaoise) Ltd.

The 41km **M7/M8 Portlaoise to Cullahill / Castletown PPP Motorway Scheme** starts at the western end of the existing Portlaoise Bypass and initially travels in a south-westerly direction. After travelling for 17km along the scheme the M7/M8 motorway to motorway interchange at Aghaboe takes the road in two separate directions; the 10km M7 section continues to the west towards Borris-in-Ossory, while the M8 proceeds 14km to the south to tie into the existing M8 to Cork, just south of Cullahill.

**The M7/M8 Portlaoise to Cullahill / Castletown PPP Motorway Scheme will**

- cut up to 45 minutes off the Dublin to Cork journey at peak times
- reduce traffic congestion and improve quality of life and safety by bypassing six towns - Abbeyleix, Durrow and Cullahill on the M8 and in Mountrath, Borris-in-Ossory and Castletown on the M7
- provide 41km of motorway in each direction - 17km M7/M8 for all traffic; another 10km for M7 traffic only, and an additional 14km for M8 traffic only
- initially cater for 15,000 vehicles per day, increasing to 18,000 over the coming months
- contribute towards safer journeys
- provide a high quality and reliable road transport network between regions and connect the Midlands, South and Midwest to Dublin, the East and the North.

The M7/M8 Portlaoise to Cullahill / Castletown Motorway Scheme is a PPP Project and will be tolled. The tolling plaza is located at Fatharnagh near Portlaoise. The toll for cars will be €1.80, to be paid by tolling tag, pre-paid Trip Card, cash or credit card. For all tolling details visit [www.midlink.ie](http://www.midlink.ie) and to compare toll tag operators and their prices visit [www.tagcompare.ie](http://www.tagcompare.ie).

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**About NTR plc**

NTR plc, the international renewable energy group, builds and runs green energy and resource-sustaining businesses. Founded in 1978, NTR has evolved from being a developer and operator of infrastructure in Ireland to an international developer and operator of renewable energy (wind, solar and ethanol) and sustainable waste management businesses in the USA, UK, and Ireland. The company employs over 4,100 people.

**[www.ntrplc.com](http://www.ntrplc.com)**

**About Celtic Roads Group**

Celtic Roads Group is an international consortium company comprising National Toll Roads, BAM PPP UK and Iridium Spain. The company is also responsible for the PPP schemes on the M1 / Dundalk Western Bypass and the M7/M8/ Portlaoise Bypass project currently under construction.