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June 8, 2011

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - 2 pages

**To: Mendocino County News Media  
Redwood Times, Garberville**

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## **County Roads Newly Eligible for Federal Support**

Functional classification changes were recently approved by the Federal Highway Administration for three roadways in Mendocino County. The roads affected by this change are a segment of Old River Road near Hopland, a segment of Main Street in Mendocino, and all of Bell Springs Road. All three roads were upgraded in status from Rural Minor Collector to Rural Major Collector. This is good news for local residents, as it makes these roads eligible for federal funding.

Functional classification became a concern in 2009 when funding became available to local cities and counties under the federal stimulus program known as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). So, earlier this year, Mendocino Council of Governments (MCOG) signed off on changes requested by the County, as the agency responsible for monitoring and concurring with any recommended changes to functional classification in Mendocino County.

"Every time there is a landslide or a flood that closes Highway 101 between Leggett and Garberville, Bell Springs Road is used as a bypass for emergency access into Humboldt County. And it is the only access to western Trinity County," reported Third District Supervisor John Pinches, who serves on MCOG's board. "So when federal money comes around, it's important to get some funds to improve this road." The nearly 18 miles of Bell Springs Road affected by this change lies in Supervisor Pinches' district. Bell Springs Road connects with Alder Point Road in Humboldt County which is already designated as a Rural Major Collector.

Old River Road, formerly known as Eastside Road, parallels U.S. 101 from south of Hopland to Talmage. The segment of the road upgraded to Rural Major Collector extends from U.S. 101 to State Route 175 near old Hopland, a distance of nearly one and a half miles. The importance and use of this segment has grown since improvements have been made to U.S. 101 south of Hopland and there has been increased commercial development on nearby Hopland Rancheria. The remainder of Old River Road had already been identified as a Rural Major Collector.

The smallest change was in the Town of Mendocino, where only about one third of a mile of Main Street was upgraded to rural major Collector. The segment is from Heeser Street to Lansing Street. Main Street in Mendocino is not only the commercial center of the community, but it also provides access to Mendocino Headlands State Park.

Significant federal funding for streets and roads improvements was last made available under ARRA. Funding flowed through MCOG for eligible projects in the cities of Ukiah, Fort Bragg, Willits, and for the County of Mendocino. The City of Point Arena had no eligible streets at that time.

Acting as the Regional Transportation Planning Agency, MCOG programs or allocates various types of state and federal transportation funds to partners including Caltrans, the County of Mendocino and the four incorporated Cities of Ukiah, Fort Bragg, Willits, and Point Arena. In addition to projects on state highways and within its five member jurisdictions, MCOG helps support multi-modal transportation activities of the Mendocino Transit Authority, North Coast Rail Authority, local airports, and others. Projects involve planning, capital improvements, rehabilitation and maintenance, transit infrastructure and fleet replacement. For more information, call the MCOG office at 463-1859 or consult the agency's web site at [www.mendocinocog.org](http://www.mendocinocog.org).

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