



National Association County Engineers

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NACE UPDATE

The almost bi-weekly newsletter for Board members, Committee Chairs, and Members
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(Note: Sources of information include the AASHTO Journal, NACo staff, Senate and House publications, the Federal Highway Administration, and other association news journals)

REGISTER NOW! NACE 2010 CONFERENCE LINKS

NACE 2010 conference information is now available on the NACE website:
www.countyengineers.org (under NACE Events).

Delegate & Guests can register on-line:

http://www.naco.org/NACETemplate.cfm?Section=NACE_Events&Template=/cfiles/nace/delegateapp.cfm

Exhibitors can register on-line:

http://www.naco.org/NACETemplate.cfm?Section=NACE_Events&Template=/cfiles/nace/exhibitapp.cfm

In addition to on-line registration and PDF files of brochures, see information on conference overview, travel, hotel, golf outing and more!

American Society of Civil Engineers magazine *Civil Engineering* has a great feature article on the construction of the Super Span of the Dallas Cowboys new stadium. We have set up tours on Tuesday afternoon. *More information about signing up to follow.* To view the article go to the following link. http://pubs.asce.org/magazines/CEMag/2010/Issue_01-10/article1.htm

Senate Considers Dividing Legislation

(AASHTO News)

Senate leaders are considering a finance bill that would extend highway and transit program authorization until Dec. 31 and a job-creation bill that could include transportation infrastructure funds.

Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Chairwoman Barbara Boxer, D-CA, outlined the plan for reporters last week. Boxer said Senate Democratic leaders are considering a strategy to split their job-creation package into several measures. The first of the bills, which Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-NV, is expected to unveil soon, will be focused on tax credits for companies that create new jobs plus an extension of unemployment benefits, Boxer said. While new funding for infrastructure is not likely to be part of that legislation, it is reported to include an extension of surface transportation authorization from Feb. 28 until December as well as a

\$20 billion transfer of General Fund revenue to the Highway Trust Fund to reimburse it for prior lost interest, she said. More subsidies for Build America Bonds are also likely to be part of the first Senate jobs bill.

The second Senate jobs bill, Boxer said, would include additional funding for highway and transit projects. Draft Senate documents shared with the media this week outlined \$25 billion in transportation infrastructure job-creation funds, a decrease from the \$37.3 billion approved by the House.

Senators are considering designating \$14 billion in job-creation funds for highways and bridges, barely more than half of the \$27.5 billion amount representatives passed in mid-December.

"Media reports indicating the Senate is proposing to slash highway spending in a jobs measure by half are quite disappointing," said John Horsley, executive director of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials. "AASHTO next week will be releasing an updated report on 'ready to go' projects state transportation departments have that could quickly take advantage of federal job-creation funds. This number is nearly 10,000 projects. We all know construction unemployment is the highest of any sector. Money spent on transportation projects will quickly put thousands of additional Americans to work, as state DOTs have extensively demonstrated in the past year by their use of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act grants."

EPW Committee to Focus on Authorization in March

In addition to extending existing surface transportation authorization and regular program funding levels through the rest of this calendar year, Boxer said she is forging ahead with work on crafting a long-term bill.

March will be "transportation month" at the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, Boxer said. The panel will begin drafting a long-term authorization bill that month and will hold hearings on the policies and funding levels proposed.

The House jobs bill includes an extension of surface transportation authorization until Sept. 30. Boxer's provision would tack on an extra three months to close out the calendar year. The Obama administration has asked Congress to delay a long-term bill until Spring 2011.

Federal Report Evaluates Condition & Performance of Nation's Transportation System

(AASHTO News)

Spending by all levels of government on the nation's highways and transit lines has increased substantially in recent years but steep increases in construction costs have eroded the purchasing power of this investment, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation, which recently released its report documenting the conditions and performance of the nation's transportation system.

The report, started in 2007 and released this month, was prepared using 2006 data to satisfy requirements for updates to Congress on the nation's surface transportation infrastructure and

future capital investment needs. (Given the size, complexity, and importance of the report, it has traditionally undergone an extensive review process prior to its release.)

Findings of the document, "2008 Status of the Nation's Highways, Bridges, and Transit: Conditions and Performance," focus on changes in various indicators since 1997. That timeframe spans the TEA-21 authorization law era in its entirety (that law was in effect between 1998 and 2003) and the early period of SAFETEA-LU, the authorization law enacted in 2005 that expired in 2009 and has been temporarily extended through next month.

"In nominal dollar terms, combined investment by all levels of government in highway and bridge infrastructure has increased sharply since TEA-21 was enacted," according to the report. Those expenditures jumped 58 percent between 1997 and 2006.

Capital spending dropped 4.4 percent in constant dollar terms during that timeframe, however, because of construction inflation. The Federal Highway Administration's Composite Bid Price Index shot up 43 percent between 2004 and 2006 due to notable increases in the prices of such materials as steel, asphalt, and cement.

Investment Increases for Rehabilitation

The report documents a shift among state and local governments throughout the TEA-21 era and the early part of SAFETEA-LU pertaining to the types of capital improvements being made. The amount of that investment spent on rehabilitation of existing highways and bridges climbed from 48 percent to 51 percent, for example, while the portion for expansion of that infrastructure declined from 44 percent to 38 percent.

"The increase in system rehabilitation since 1997 has had a positive effect on the physical condition of key subsets of the nation's highway and bridge infrastructure," according to the report.

An example of this involves the National Highway System, where the proportion of vehicle miles traveled on pavements with good ride quality increased from 39 percent in 1997 to 57 percent in 2006. In addition, the VMT on NHS routes with acceptable ride quality rose during that same period from 89 percent to 93 percent.

Not every trend during that time was as promising, however, when looking at federal-aid highways as a whole. While the share of VMT on those pavements with good quality increased from 39 percent to 47 percent, the portion of VMT on roads with acceptable quality declined from 86.4 percent to 86.0 percent. While the portion of pavements with acceptable ride quality has grown in rural and small urban areas, that percentage has declined in urban regions.

These results also apply to bridges, the report notes. While the raw share of all bridges classified as deficient went down from 33 percent in 1997 to 28 percent in 2006, the report also points out how conditions for those structures tend to vary in terms of functional systems. The percentage of interstate bridges rated as structurally deficient or functionally obsolete, for example, is lower than the comparable share for bridges on collectors or local roads.

"Despite improving conditions on many roads and bridges, operational performance -- the quality of use of that infrastructure -- has deteriorated since 1997," according to the report.

2010 Sign Maintenance & Management Workshop, Fargo ND

This workshop will be held on March 17 - 18, 2010. The brochure is available on the ATSSA website at www.atssa.com/cs/roadway-traffic-safety-events.

WEBCAST ANNOUNCEMENT: 4 Sessions of Michigan's County Engineers' Workshop

The following is a link that goes to a flyer specifically for the 4 webcast sessions:

http://michiganltap.org/downloads/Email_brochure_2010.pdf

WEBCAST OVERVIEW

Since the mid 1960s, County Engineers in Michigan have convened once a year, every year for an exclusive day-long workshop to catch up on the latest roadway management tips, techniques and technologies. This year, for the first time in history, select sessions from the workshop will be broadcast live over the Internet. On February 24, 2010 you and your staff can get web-based access to four of the most anticipated sessions, including:

"State-of-the-Art Asphalt Pavement Maintenance"

Thomas Wood, Research Project Specialist – Minnesota Department of Transportation (9:30 - 10:00 A.M. Eastern Time)

"Want to Change the World? – How Construction Career Days is Attracting the Next Generation of Road Workers"

Brindley Byrd, Executive Director – Michigan Construction Career Council
(11:15 - 11:45 A.M. Eastern Time)

"Out of the Lab and Under the Bridge – Carbon Fiber Support Beams Cut Construction Costs"

Dr. Habib J. Dagher, Director – Advanced Structures & Composites Center at the University of Maine
(1:15 - 1:45 A.M. Eastern Time)

"Sharing Resources to Get Stuff Done – Mutual Aid the Road Commission Way(s)"

Tom Byle, P.E., Asst. Director of Engineering – Kent County Road Commission Jerry Byrne, Fleet Maintenance Manager – Kent County Road Commission Bob Lewis, Operations Manager – Lenewee County Road Commission Dorothy Pohl, Managing Director – Ionia County Road Commission
(1:45 - 2:45 P.M. Eastern Time)

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

Anyone involved in the day-to-day management of local roads and bridges - including county and city engineers, city managers and elected officials - will benefit from these webcasts.

COST & REGISTRATION

\$40 per connection. (There is no limit to the number of attendees per connection. Feel free to set up a projector and fill a room). To register, please call the Center for Technology and Training at

906-487-2102 or email your contact information (name, title, organization, address, phone number) to ctt@mtu.edu <<mailto:ctt@mtu.edu>> .

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

http://www.michiganltap.org/workshop/2010_cew.html

SPONSORED BY:

County Road Association of Michigan

Center for Technology & Training at the Michigan Tech Transportation Institute

HAVE YOU VISITED Our Local Roads Matter website!

Dan Fedderly, Executive Director Wisconsin County Highway Association, Dunn County Supervisor and former Wisconsin County Highway Superintendent presented the “rural county” view in a briefing to Congressional Staffers for the National Association of Counties. To view his presentation visit the NACE Local Roads Matter Campaign site

<http://countyengineers...org/LRM/index.html> or click on the Local Roads Matter button on the left side of this page. Then click on the Social Media Center.

Unique Public Service Announcement from United Kingdom on Seat Belt Use

This video for seatbelt use from the UK is worth a look – it is way out of the mold from the standard PSA type safety messages: <http://www.embracethis.co.uk/>

AASHTO Subcommittee on Maintenance Website Launched

This website provides useful materials and references for all highway professional managers. Click on [Subcommittee on Maintenance](#)

Rural Safety News: December 2009

The Center for Excellence in Rural Safety at the University of Minnesota has released the latest issue of its rural safety electronic newsletter, which highlights research and resources concerning rural safety. [\[More\]](#)

Early Estimate of Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatalities for January - September 2009

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has released a Traffic Safety Facts sheet that examines a projection of traffic fatalities for the first three quarters of 2009. [\[More\]](#)

Successes in Stewardship January and February Newsletters

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has released the latest issue of its Successes in Stewardship monthly newsletter, which highlights current environmental streamlining practices from around the United States. [\[More\]](#)

The February issue of FHWA's "Successes in Stewardship" Newsletter is now available at: <http://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/strmlng/newsletters/feb10nl.asp>. FHWA is pleased to announce that this issue's feature story is: "Measuring Progress in Linking Transportation Planning and Environmental Analysis."

Monitoring Scour Critical Bridges

TRB's National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Report 396: Monitoring Scour Critical Bridges explores the current state of practice for fixed scour bridge monitoring. [\[More\]](#)

National Conference on Pavement Evaluation 2010*

TRB is cosponsoring the conference on Pavement Evaluation 2010 on October 24-29, 2010, in Roanoke, Virginia. The conference will build on accomplishments of the previous conference, held in 2002, combining the annual Road Profiler Users Group meeting with discussions and presentations from other disciplines on non-destructive pavement evaluation. In addition to profiling, the conference will explore texture and friction measurement, tire-pavement noise, ground-penetrating radar, video distress rating, and structural testing. [\[More\]](#)