



The Transportation Development Association of Wisconsin is a statewide nonprofit organization that advocates building and maintaining an efficient, reliable and interconnected transportation system that addresses our state's needs for safe mobility and economic growth.

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IN THIS ISSUE

<i>TDA Presents Important Transportation Forum</i>	1
<i>Building Our Way Out</i>	2
<i>AASHTO Releases Reauthorization Proposal</i>	3
<i>Amtrak Ridership Swells</i>	4
<i>Iowa Public Policy Center to Begin VMT Study</i>	4
<i>Transportation in the News</i>	5
<i>Interesting News Coverage</i>	6
<i>Association Notes</i>	7



Register Today

If you would like to receive this publication by email, please contact the TDA office at (608) 256-7044 or general@tdawisconsin.org.

TDA Presents Important Transportation Forum

On November 12th-13th a forum on the ongoing transportation crisis will convene at the Monona Terrace in Madison. TDA, along with a host of businesses and statewide associations, is hosting ***Transportation: Our Future Rides On It***. The forum is bringing together noted experts at both the national and state level to discuss the short and long-term challenges and opportunities facing Wisconsin. The forum will also address the potential strategies Wisconsin can employ to overcome the challenges and take full advantage of the opportunities.

The forum is being held at an important time. The elections will be over and our newly elected representatives will have a small window of time to synthesize information and establish priorities.

The forum will be highlighted by the keynote speaker, Michael Gallis. Mr. Gallis is widely considered one of the nation's foremost experts on regional development strategies and transportation logistics. Other speakers at the forum include Secretary Frank Busalacchi, Wisconsin Department of Transportation; Rich Gunther, General Motors executive;

Forum continued on page 2

Forum continued from page 1

Janet Kavinoky, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Director of Transportation Infrastructure and Chip Brewer, S.C. Johnson & Son Director of Worldwide Government Relations.

The first day of the conference will examine national and global trends that are impacting Wisconsin's ability to compete in today's economy, as well as a discussion of potential strategies that are being implemented in other states and countries to finance transportation investments. The second day will focus more specifically on Wisconsin's challenges and the range of options that may be available.

The forum is intended to focus attention on the critical role Wisconsin's transportation infrastructure will play in efforts to improve the state's economy.

Building Our Way Out

Both houses of Congress are considering a lame duck session the week of November 17th to work on a second stimulus package. Democratic leaders have made it clear that they would like the next package to include a healthy infrastructure investment component – not just transportation but also infrastructure spending for water, schools, waterway improvements and other areas.

The House recently held hearings on a second package. Ben Bernanke, chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, testified that given the likely protracted slowdown in the economy, a second stimulus package is appropriate. However, he did not fully endorse the inclusion of infrastructure spending in the package, referring to the slow pay out for infrastructure projects due to the long time frame from planning to construction. However, others have expressed a view more similar to economist Paul Krugman:

Excerpt of Krugman article in the *New York Times*

"And this is also a good time to engage in some serious infrastructure spending, which the country badly needs in any case. The usual argument against public works as economic stimulus is that they take too long: by the time you get around to repairing the bridge and upgrading the rail line, the slump is over and the stimulus isn't needed. Well, that argument has no force now, since the chances that this slump will be over anytime soon are virtually nil. So let's get those projects rolling."

President Bush has become more open to the idea of a second stimulus bill, but the Administration has expressed strong reservations about infrastructure investment as a short-term stimulus.

Build continued on page 6

Don't wait. The registration deadline is November 5th.

transportation
our future rides on it.

presented by
TDA

November 12-13, 2008 • Monona Terrace
www.ourfutureridesonit.com

Visit www.ourfutureridesonit.com for more information and to register.

AASHTO Releases Reauthorization Proposal

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) recently released an outline for the next federal surface transportation reauthorization. The specific policy recommendations are listed below:

Transportation Goals

- Increasing funding for congestion relief projects in metro areas;
- Improving highway connections and transit access for rural America;
- Doubling transit ridership to 20 billion by 2030, and 50 billion by 2050;
- Trimming 6-12 months from project delivery time by expanding state environmental responsibilities and integrating planning;
- Dedicating federal funding for a fast and reliable intercity passenger rail network;
- Reducing highway traffic fatalities by half in two decades; and
- Moving as swiftly as practical from current funding methods to a distance-based user fee.

Reform Proposals

- Streamlining of the current number of federal programs and concentrating 90 percent of federal dollars on “core programs” distributed to the states;
- Capping earmarks at no more than five percent of the federal program;
- Expanding the current congestion air quality program to include climate change initiatives;
- Creating a new “operations” program to fund low-cost, rapid deployment projects to reduce delay and improve reliability of the system;
- Providing dedicated federal funding for a national intercity passenger rail system including high speed rail corridors, regional

corridors, and long distance service;

- Addressing expanding freight transportation needs through planning and investment programs; and
- Boosting transit funding and ridership while streamlining the federal program structure and grant processes.

\$545 Billion Six-Year Multi-modal Program

Emphasizing the need to employ every kind of transportation to meet future demands, AASHTO calls for an overall \$545 billion investment from 2010 through 2015 for highways, transit, freight movement, and intercity passenger rail. Included are the following:

- \$375 billion for highways,
- \$93 billion for transit,
- \$42 billion for freight improvements (from sources outside the Highway Trust Fund), and
- \$35 billion dedicated funding for intercity passenger rail.

The proposal identifies a number of possible funding options for consideration by Congress and calls for maximum flexibility for state and local governments in the way the funds are used.

Visit www.transportation.org to view the policy positions approved by the AASHTO Board of Directors.

Amtrak Ridership Swells

Total Amtrak ridership grew 11 percent over the 25.8 million trips taken in fiscal year 2007. This is the sixth consecutive year the company has posted ridership and revenue gains. Highway and airport congestion, high gas and airline prices and environmental awareness have contributed to increased Amtrak usage.

Six short-distance corridors had ridership growth of more than 20 percent last year, including the Hiawatha (Chicago to Milwaukee) at 25.9 percent. The other routes were the Downeastern (Boston to Portland, Maine; 31.2 percent), the Piedmont (Raleigh to Charlotte, North Carolina; 30.4 percent), Kansas City to St. Louis; 30.2 percent), Albany-Niagara Falls-Toronto (22.9 percent), and Hoosier State (Chicago to Indianapolis; 20.6 percent).

Federal financial support for Amtrak should grow in the coming years under legislation passed by the Congress and recently signed by the President. The bill authorized \$13 billion for Amtrak and other passenger-rail programs over the next five years. A portion of that amount (\$1.9 billion) is for state grants to fund rail projects. This legislation authorizes the programs and amounts, but annual appropriations will still be necessary for the actual funding increases to be realized.

Iowa Public Policy Center to Begin VMT Study

The federal government is funding a \$16.5 million study in six states to test the technology as well as motorists' reactions to the concept of road use tracking (vehicle miles traveled –VMT) and fees. A global positioning system (GPS) will track not only the mileage driven but also whether each road traveled is funded by the state, federal or local governments. Study participants will then receive a simulated bill each month for the road use fee owed to each level of government.

The national study will be conducted by the Public Policy Center at the University of Iowa. Participants will be selected from the following areas:

- San Diego, California
- Baltimore, Maryland
- Austin, Texas
- Boise, Idaho
- Research Triangle in North Carolina (including Durham, Raleigh, and Chapel Hill)
- Eastern Iowa (Delaware, Dubuque, Linn, Jones, Jackson, Cedar, Clinton, Scott and Muscatine counties)

The study is expected to track participants over 8 months.

The gas tax is a dwindling source of revenue as people drive less and shift to more fuel-efficient or alternative-powered vehicles. Road use fees are one option to replace the existing gas tax. However, concerns about privacy issues – the government being able to track every movement – still need to be addressed.

For more information on the study, visit www.roaduserstudygroup.org.

Transportation in the News

Milwaukee – A recent study by UW Milwaukee’s Center for Economic Development titled “Out of Service: The Impact of Transit Cuts on Access to Jobs in Metropolitan Milwaukee” studies the impact on how commuters have been affected by bus route reductions over the past seven years in Milwaukee. The study points out that the reductions in bus routes over this time period resulted in a change in the proportion of employers within a quarter-mile of a bus stop from 63% to 55% in the four county region. The study points out that the employers in Milwaukee without bus service represents at least 40,507 jobs.

The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) and the Public Policy Forum have both warned that, without new funding the Milwaukee County bus system will likely be forced to cut service by another 35%, eliminating all Freeway Flyer routes and most night, weekend and suburban service. The report concludes “Such an outcome would be disastrous for the regional economy”.

Go to <http://www4.uwm.edu/ced/publications/transitstudy08.pdf> to view the entire report.

Florida – A Spanish conglomerate has been selected to lead a \$1.8 billion project to expand Interstate 595 in Broward County. This expansion will include new variably priced reversible tolling lanes. If the contract is executed, ACS Infrastructures will finance, design and build the project over a five-year period starting in June 2009 and then operate the facility until 2044. ACS Infrastructure will receive 30 annual payments of \$63.98 million regardless of the tolls collected after the road opens. State officials are hoping to get the project done in one-third of the time it would normally take the state by using the private vendor’s financing.

This project was moved up under Governor Crist’s “Accelerate Florida” economic stimulus plan. Continuing his focus on the economy,

the Governor seeks to quickly create jobs and stimulate the state’s economy by accelerating work on roadway projects.

Idaho – Idaho needs \$240 million more each year to deal with its crumbling roads and bridges. One of the ideas Governor Otter is floating to raise the additional money is a mileage tax. As either a replacement or supplement to the gas tax, drivers would pay for the number of miles they drive each year. The state is considering simply recording odometer readings when people renew their registrations and then assessing the mileage tax. However, officials admit they don’t know how they would verify mileage and protect against odometer fraud.

Idaho has had a flat fuel tax of 25 cents per gallon since 1996. Ethanol is exempt from this tax. More fuel-efficient cars and ethanol-blended gasoline have put a strain on the state’s transportation budget. State transportation revenue from fuel taxes, registration fees and other sources declined 1.5 percent in the most recent fiscal year and is projected to decrease 2.6 percent in 2009.

“All options are on the table right now,” says Jon Hanion, Otter spokesman.

Illinois – The Chicago City Council recently agreed in a unanimous vote to approve the \$2.52 billion deal to privatize Midway Airport. If the plan is approved by the Federal Aviation Administration and the Transportation Security Administration, this would be the first privatization of a major U.S. airport.

Texas – Governor Perry, Texas’s chief proponent of private toll roads, is against higher taxes in general, but if lawmakers want to pass a bill that would index the state’s gas tax to inflation, he won’t work against it, and he won’t veto it. However, he doesn’t think the bill has the votes to pass.

Transportation News continued on page 7

Interesting News Coverage

The News Hour with Jim Lehrer week-long series
Blueprint for America

- October 20, 2008 – “Aging Bridges Among Country’s Infrastructure Woes”
http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/government_programs/july-dec08/infrastructure_10-20.html
- October 21, 2008 – “Increased Decay Strains Budget-strapped New Orleans Port”
http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/government_programs/july-dec08/nolaport_10-21.html
- October 22, 2008 – “Population Growth Burdens Roads, Schools and State Programs”
http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/business/july-dec08/blueprint_10-22.html
- October 23, 2008 – “Chicago Airport Faces Serious Growing Pains”
http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/transportation/july-dec08/airport_10-23.html
- October 24, 2004 – “Infrastructure Success in Boston Raises Prospect of Future Urban Spending” ***This segment includes an interview with Michael Gallis who will be the keynote speaker at the upcoming TDA policy forum.***
http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/government_programs/july-dec08/bigdigtalk_10-24.html

Logistics Management October 7, 2008 –
“Transportation leaders say next president must improve U.S. infrastructure”

http://www.logisticsmgmt.com/index.asp?layout=article&articleid=CA6602438&article_prefix=CA&article_id=6602438&industryid=48465

CNNMoney.com October 15, 2008 – “Your vote, your crummy highways. The economy is in trouble - so are the roads, bridges and trains it depends on. Here’s a close look at how the candidates would fix the problem.”

http://money.cnn.com/2008/10/15/news/economy/infrastructure_and_economy/?postversion=2008101506

Build continued from page 2

Prior to the end of the last session, the House voted to approve a \$60.7 billion economic stimulus package that included \$12.8 billion in highway and bridge spending. The measure was never brought up in the Senate, and a Senate stimulus bill never received enough votes for cloture. Wisconsin’s share of the House infrastructure stimulus package was estimated at \$245.9 million. The package currently being discussed is expected to be much larger.

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Go to www.aaa.com or call 1-800-236-1300 to find an office near you.

To receive your AAA discount provide your AAA group number TRN003.

Join today and take advantage of the great benefits and savings.

Association Notes

Transportation News continued from page 5

Calendar of Events

TDA policy forum, **Transportation: Our Future Rides On It** – Wednesday & Thursday, November 12th & 13th. Visit www.OurFutureRidesOnIt.com for event information and a registration form. Don't wait. The registration deadline is November 5th

Meeting of the Special Committee on Regional Transportation Authority - November 13th at 10 a.m. in 412 East, State Capitol.

2008 WisDOT Annual Freight Railroad Conference – November 19th in Madison. Click [here](#) for more information and a registration form.

If you know of an upcoming event that would be of interest to TDA members, please forward information to the TDA office, general@tdawisconsin.org.

Save these Dates

2009 TDA Fly-in – Tuesday & Wednesday, April 21st & 22nd

Visit the events page on the TDA website, www.tdawisconsin.org, for TDA event details and any future changes in the schedule.

Governor Perry wants to find \$600 million per year in new highway funds and is willing to work with the legislature to find other programs to cut if necessary.

Wyoming – The Joint Transportation, Highways and Military Affairs Interim Committee, which has been working for months on legislation to give tolling authority to the Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT), has decided not to pursue the legislation during the upcoming legislative session. The committee cited negative reaction from voters and other reasons.

The state was investigating tolling as a way to cover increasingly expensive maintenance on I-80. WYDOT has estimated that the cost of keeping I-80 in good condition over the next 30 years is more than \$6.4 billion. Wyoming would require federal approval to charge tolls on I-80.

Last year, an attempt by the Joint Transportation Committee to generate the necessary maintenance funds by increasing the state gas tax failed. WYDOT officials plan to continue to investigate tolling scenarios over the next year, while they work on educating people on the state highway funding shortfall.