



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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TDA Forum A Success

Our Future Rides On It, a policy forum presented by the Transportation Development Association of Wisconsin, was a great success. The event, which was held in Madison on November 12-13, addressed the serious challenges and implications of transportation funding in Wisconsin. A full slate of state and national officials and experts spoke at the forum, including:



- Janet Kavinoky, U.S. Chamber of Commerce director of transportation infrastructure
- Frank Busalacchi, Wisconsin Secretary of Transportation
- Chip Brewer, director of worldwide government relations for S.C. Johnson & Son
- Patrick Jones, executive director of the International Bridge, Tunnel and Turnpike Association

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- Ken Yunker, executive director of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

Michael Gallis, of Michael Gallis & Associates, delivered the keynote address at ***Our Future Rides On It***. He is widely considered the country's leading expert in large-scale metropolitan regional development strategies and has pioneered a specialty in building frameworks through which public, private and institutional leaders can work effectively to create globally competitive regions.



As successful as the forum was, it is only a beginning – an important start to a discussion about how Wisconsin should fund transportation in the future.

The entire event was videotaped by Wisconsin Eye. If you missed the event or just want to refresh your memory or share a portion of the event with a colleague, please visit [www. OurFutureRidesOnIt.com](http://www.OurFutureRidesOnIt.com).

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Executive Perspective

By Craig Thompson, TDA Executive Director

RTA Legislative Council Work Should Continue

The news earlier this year that the Joint Legislative Council had selected Regional Transportation Authorities (RTAs) as one of the 12 topics for study was very encouraging. Legislative Council study committees have tackled some of our most important and vexing issues through the years. These study committees provide an opportunity for members of the public, with expertise in a given area, to work with our state elected officials to craft public policy solutions for the full legislature's consideration. Since its inception in 1947, the Legislative Council has become an institution in Wisconsin government and a model which other states have emulated.

The study committee on RTAs has 22 members – two senators, four representatives and 16 public members. The committee has met three times to date and has heard from experts from Wisconsin and across the country.

Unfortunately, the most recent meeting scheduled for November 13th was cancelled at the last minute by a call of the chair. More recently, the chairman, Representative Al Ott, informed the committee by letter that it will no longer meet due to the change in political leadership, the current state of the economy and the state budget deficit.

This is an unfortunate decision. The pressing needs in this state that led to the Legislative Council's decision to create a study committee on this topic have not gone away. They are more real and immediate than ever. The outcome of the election should really hold no bearing on whether this study committee continues its work. For fifty years, study committees have carried out their responsibilities with Democrats in control of both houses, Republicans in control

of both houses and split control of the legislature. That is the genius of the Legislative Council study committees – they can transcend partisan politics. The preponderance of public members helps to ensure that.

The validity of the other eleven study committees including ones on High-Risk Juvenile Offenders, Domestic Biofuels and State-Tribal Relations have not been called into question due to the elections, the economy or the deficit and – the committee on RTAs should not be either.

Fortunately, the co-chairs of the Legislative Council agree that this committee should continue its work. Senator Fred Risser has indicated that if members of the committee are no longer interested in serving on the committee that he can appoint others who are. The other co-chair, Representative Steve Wieckert has indicated that this remains a paramount issue for the state and the committee should continue its work.

The co-chairs are correct. The members of this Legislative Council Study committee should continue the important work they have started. All points of view should be heard and recorded. In the end, a proposal should be put forth for the legislature to consider in its standing committees and, potentially on the floor of the Assembly and Senate. Our elected officials can then vote for what they believe to be in the best interests of their constituents.

DOT Releases 2009-11 Budget Proposal

Last month the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) submitted its 2009-11 budget recommendations to Department of Administration (DOA) Secretary Michael Morgan. The WisDOT submission is the first step in the process. The Governor will be submitting his budget to the legislature in mid-February. The following are some of the highlights of the DOT proposal:

Revenue

- Approximately \$166 million in new revenues in Fiscal Year 2010 and \$227 million in Fiscal Year 2011 from the creation of an oil company assessment. The assessment would be applied to the gross receipts of motor fuel suppliers for the privilege of doing business in Wisconsin. The assessment would be collected quarterly and would apply to the receipts that are the first sale of motor vehicle fuel received by the supplier for sale in this state.
- The assessment rate would increase based on annual gross receipts with the highest rate being 2.5%.

Total Gross Receipts	Assessment Rate
\$0-\$15,000,000	Exempt
\$15,000,001-\$75,000,000	0.5%
\$75,000,001-\$120,000,000	1.5%
Over \$120,000,000	2.5%

- Statutory language would be included to prohibit any supplier from passing the costs of the assessment on to the customer. The language indicates that any person who takes such action would be subject to a penalty equal to the amount of the gain the supplier received by increasing the selling price.
- The assessment will be applied to first sales on October 1, 2009 or the effective date of the bill if it is after October 1, 2009.

Program Increases

- Most programs including general transportation aids, local roads improvement program, regional planning commissions, state highway rehabilitation, maintenance, the major highway program, rehabilitation for the southeast Wisconsin freeway system and aeronautics assistance receive a 1% annual increase.
- Transit assistance and elderly and disabled aids receive a 3% annual increase.
- Creation of a Southeast Wisconsin Transit Capital Assistance Program and authorization for \$100 million in general obligation (GO) bonding to fund the program. The program proposed by the Department would provide a share of funding for transit capital and also provide an incentive to local governments in Southeast Wisconsin to come to consensus on regional governance and local revenue options for support of transit operations.
- \$40 million in general obligation bonding authority for the Rail Passenger Route Development Program. Debt service for this GO bonding is paid from the state's general fund.
- \$113 million in Fiscal Year 2010 and \$68 million in Fiscal Year 2011 for work related to the construction of the Zoo interchange.
- \$63 million in state funds and \$285 in general obligation bonding authority to continue work on Interstate 94 from Milwaukee to the Illinois state line to meet the scheduled completion date of 2016 (a total of \$571 million is proposed for the project this biennium).
- \$1.8 million in Fiscal Year 2010 and \$10 million in Fiscal Year 2011 to add capacity for the Amtrak Hiawatha passenger rail service between Chicago and Milwaukee.

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Obama Names Transportation Transition Team

President-elect Obama recently named the team that will provide the new administration with the information it will need about transportation policies and the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT). The transition team has already started work to “ensure that senior appointees have the information necessary to complete the confirmation process, lead their departments, and begin implementing signature policy initiatives immediately after they are sworn in,” according to a statement released by the Obama transition team.

The three team leaders for the transportation transition team are very experienced in the workings of the Department of Transportation, all having held senior USDOT positions in the Clinton administration.

Transportation Transition Leaders

- Mort Downey – Downey, a transportation consultant, served as deputy secretary of transportation almost the entire eight years of the Clinton administration.
- Jane Garvey – Garvey has experience in both highways and aviation. She was the administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration from 1997-2000 and before that deputy administrator of the Federal Highway Administration. She currently heads U.S. public/private partnerships for J.P. Morgan.
- Michael Huerta – Huerta served in various positions in the Clinton DOT including chief of staff to the secretary. He currently works for a transportation technology company.

The transportation transition team recently met with national transportation groups including the American Road & Transportation Builders (ARTBA), American Association of State Highway & Transportation Officials (AASHTO), Associated General Contractors of America and American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC). The groups provided suggestions for the upcoming

authorizations of surface transportation and aviation programs and also how to maximize the benefits of the infrastructure component of any economic stimulus package.

Election Results Support Transportation

Voters across the United States supported transportation investment at the ballot box in November. There were 32 state and local ballot measures to initiate, extend or increase taxes or to approve bond funds. According to an analysis conducted by the American Road & Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA), over three-quarters of the measures were approved and will generate more than \$71 billion in new revenue for infrastructure work.

Taxpayers consistently support increased taxes for transportation when they are given clear examples of how their tax money will be put to work. A large majority of transportation initiatives also passed in 2006 and 2004.

Visit http://www.artba.org/pdf/2008_Ballot_Initiatives_Report.pdf to view the 2008 ballot measures and election results.

Budget continued from page 4

- Increase bonding authority for the Freight Railroad Preservation Program (FRPP) - \$60 million in transportation fund supported general obligation bonds.
- \$12.7 million new transportation fund supported general obligation bonding authority for the Harbor Assistance Program (HAP). This is the same amount as the previous biennium.
- \$17 million to continue implementation of the federal REAL ID Act of 2005.
- The department requested creation of a continuing federal indirect cost appropriation to partially fund the cost of certain administrative functions that indirectly support federal programs. Establishing a federal indirect cost reimbursement program will not increase the amount of federal funds available to DOT programs. Rather, the program would allow for the transfer of funding from other federal appropriations.
- The department requested authority to modify the current 10-year license plate reissuance period to reissue license plates through an administrative process rather than a statutorily established cycle.

Policy Changes

- The Department is requesting a modification to the statutory definition of a major highway project which sets new thresholds to more accurately distinguish these projects from more typical rehabilitation projects. Under the department's proposal, a major highway project would be a project, other than an approach to a bridge over a river that forms a boundary of the state or a southeast Wisconsin freeway rehabilitation project, which has a total cost of more than \$25 million and involves any of the following: construction of a new route of 2.5 miles or more; adds capacity to five or more miles of existing highway; converts an existing multi-lane divided highway of ten or more miles to freeway standards; or is a project not included above that has a total cost of at least \$75 million.
- The department requested that language created in 2001 Wisconsin Act 16 related to program definition for the installation, replacement, rehabilitation, or maintenance of highway signs, traffic control signals, highway lighting, pavement markings, and intelligent transportation systems be deleted to allow flexibility in funding these maintenance activities. The current language identifies that these contract let activities are part of the Maintenance and Traffic Operations Program and not the State Highway Rehabilitation Program.

Stimulus Package Unlikely until Next Year

The lame duck session of Congress will probably not produce an economic stimulus bill. Even if the Congress was not currently preoccupied with helping the automakers, President Bush has been firm in his opposition to most additional stimulus spending, especially infrastructure spending. However, the new Congress will likely move fairly quickly after it convenes on January 6th to pass an economic stimulus package. President Obama has said he would like a stimulus package to be the first bill he signs after taking office.

The three stimulus proposals which have been introduced, H.R. 7110, S. 3604 and S. 3689, all contain funds for transportation investment. The amounts range from \$10.7 billion to \$18.5 billion and would include funding for a variety of programs such as aviation, highways, transit and passenger rail. These proposals can be seen as the logical starting point for discussions next January.

Transportation in the News

Amtrak – Amtrak announced that Joseph Boardman, the administrator for the Federal Railroad Administration, will lead the national passenger railroad for the next year. Amtrak will conduct a search in the coming months for a permanent chief executive officer.

Boardman replaces Alexander Kummant, the President and CEO of Amtrak for the last two years, who resigned unexpectedly on November 14th. Boardman has nearly 34 years of experience in the surface transportation industry at city, county, state, and federal government levels.

Amtrak has posted six consecutive years of growth in ridership and revenue, carrying more than 28.7 million passengers in the last fiscal year.

Florida – Six firms competing for the right to lease the toll road known as “Alligator Alley” have until January 9 to submit bids to the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). Under the proposed agreement, the winning firm would lease, maintain and operate Interstate 75, which runs east/west across the state, for 50 to 75 years. The lessee would make an upfront payment to FDOT and then receive a portion of the toll revenue during the lease period. Last month, FDOT announced that it intends to enter a \$1.8 billion deal with a Spanish-led group to design, build, operate and maintain express lanes on a section of Interstate 595 in the Fort Lauderdale area.

Georgia – Georgia is the latest state to receive federal funds from the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) for an innovative program to improve mobility and fight gridlock in metropolitan areas. Georgia will receive \$110 million from the federal government to support a state plan to reduce traffic congestion by converting I-85’s HOV lanes to HOT lanes and establishing a new high-speed commuter bus service into downtown Atlanta.

Michigan – Transportation spending must double to maintain a “good” level of investment in roads, bridges, airports and public transit according to the Transportation Funding Task Force report recently release. The task force, a broad coalition of business and government leaders, was created by Governor Jennifer Granholm and the legislature to evaluate the options for increasing transportation funding.

Identified options include increasing vehicle registration fees, changing the gas tax from a per-gallon rate to a percentage, public/private partnerships to construct toll lanes, raising the diesel tax to 19 cents per gallon to make it equal to the gas tax and increasing the state’s sales tax by 1 cent and dedicating the funds to transportation.

In the final analysis the task force concluded that doing nothing is simply not an option. “Without additional state and local investment, Michigan stands to lose up to \$1 billion in federal funds [due to lack of matching funds] across the modes and more than 17,000 jobs.” 2009 is estimated to be the last year Michigan will have enough state and local matching funds to claim all federal transportation funding available to the state.

Visit http://www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,1607,7-151-9623_31969_49303---,00.html to view the entire report.

Oregon – Governor Ted Kulongoski proposes more than \$1 billion in new transportation spending saying that the state needs this investment to boost the economy and fix its crumbling infrastructure.

“Investing in transportation in tough times sets us up for success in good times,” said Kulongoski.

The governor proposes to fund this investment with a variety of tax and fee increases including a 2-cent gas tax hike and more than doubling

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What the President Should Know

“What the New President and Congress Should Know about Transportation” is a new outreach campaign from the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). Kicked off in time for the Thanksgiving holiday, the busiest travel season of the year, AASHTO is asking people to share their thoughts on the U.S. transportation system.

“It’s important that the American people have a voice in creating the kind of transportation system this nation needs,” said John Horsely, AASHTO’s executive director.

Users of the system, such as drivers and transit users, as well as transportation experts have already posted comments to the website expressing concerns about traffic congestion, safety, air quality and project delays due to funding shortfalls. AASHTO plans to share the public’s concerns with members of Congress and the White House early next year.

To view the comments or post your own, visit www.IToldthePresident.org.

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the annual fees for car title and registration. He would also borrow \$600 million, raise the tobacco tax by 2.5 cents and take \$16 million in lottery money to pay for railroad, mass transit and port projects.

These fee increases are expected to be controversial when the legislature convenes in January. However, business groups are pressuring lawmakers to increase transportation investment. The state’s 24-cent gas tax was last increased in 1993. Since then, construction inflation has cut its buying power in half while Oregon’s population has soared.

Utah – The Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) recently announced that any project not currently under contract will be shelved indefinitely due to decreasing tax receipts. UDOT published a list of 3.9 billion of projects affected by this decision. Work will continue on the \$2 billion in current projects.

The delay of these projects has led the governor and lawmakers to begin discussing ways to increase transportation revenue including changing the gas tax from a flat rate per gallon to a percentage of the cost at the pump, raising the gas tax or increasing the percentage of the state sales tax that goes toward transportation projects.

Interesting News Coverage

NPR, November 15, 2008 – “A strange shortage illustrates the global economy” <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=97001507>

USA Today, November 19, 2008 – “Americans driving less, unmoved by lower gas prices” http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2008-11-19-driving_N.htm

WPR, December 3, 2008 – “Feasibility study for container facility slated for Green Bay” <http://clipcast.wpr.org:8080/ramgen/wpr/news/news081204pm.rm>

Phil Ramlet New TDA President

Phil Ramlet is the new president of the Transportation Development Association. Ramlet was elected the association's 32nd president at its annual business meeting on December 4 and will serve for a term of one year.

Ramlet is president/CEO of Appleton-based OMNNI Associates, Inc. Founded in 1968, OMNNI Associates is a full-service engineering, architecture and environmental consulting firm involved with projects that range from traffic studies to the design of highways, interchanges, bridges, and airport runways.

OMNNI Associates has been a TDA member for more than 20 years, and Ramlet has been a member of the TDA board of directors for the last 8 years. He previously held vice president and secretary positions in the association.

Ramlet is joined on TDA's 2009 executive committee by the following members:

- 1st vice president: Rick Jones, city of Racine
- 2nd vice president: Dean Haen, Wisconsin Commercial Ports Association
- secretary: Tom Fisher, Wisconsin Laborers' District Council
- treasurer: Paul Halverson, Douglas County Highway Department
- past president: Sheldon Johnson, Northwest Regional Planning Commission

Thanks to Sheldon Johnson for his generous service as TDA's president last year.

Association Notes

Save these Dates

2009 TDA Fly-in

April 21st & 22nd

Registration materials will be emailed later this week.

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

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