

A SAFER ROAD TO TOMORROW

April 2009 Newsletter

Safer Roads 2009 Booklet, "In the Red," Released



Safer Road's third booklet, "In the Red" was released in February of this year. "In the Red," discusses providing adequate funding for the State's Ten Year Plan. Where the past booklets predicted what would happen if sufficient funds were not raised, this year's booklet talks about the fact that New Hampshire is now in the red, and a financial plan needs to be implemented. "In the Red" makes the case that without proper resources to restore the infrastructure the entire state's quality of life is at risk.

Poor infrastructure has a dramatic effect on tourism, the state's second largest industry. Less people will want to travel to New Hampshire if the roads are not maintained, which also means less money coming into the state to be spent on dining and lodging. If tourism begins to fall because of unrepaired roads, the economy will suffer. Additionally, the infrastructure is what brings customers and markets together. In addition to worsening the economy, safety is a major concern of poor roads and bridges. More accidents will occur the longer our infrastructure is left in disrepair.

"In the Red" calls for New Hampshire to make the tough decision and provide a long-term solution for the problem. It stresses that action needs to be taken in the immediate future to solve this problem. Without a solution, there is no doubt the tourism, restaurant, and lodging industries, as well as safety, will be negatively affected. "In the Red" implements charts and statistics to drive the point home.

Gas Tax Increase Creates A Long Term Solution



infrastructure projects.

House Bill 644, as amended by the House, will provide New Hampshire's infrastructure with much needed support. The bill increases the rate of the road toll (gas tax), establishes the New Hampshire road and bridge account, limits the use of road toll revenues, and establishes a commission to study revenue sources for funding improvements to highways and bridges. This bill is a long-term answer to the question of how to fund the necessary

Currently, New Hampshire's roads and bridges are deteriorating without the funds to repair them. The infrastructure is old and aging; it cannot support today's traffic volume and truck weights. These aging roads and bridges need to be maintained in order to keep drivers safe, however with the shortfall in funding, only 260 miles will get repaved this year compared to 605 miles in 1996. This leads to a 16 year repaving cycle, which means that more roads will need to be rebuilt rather than just repaved. The normal repaving cycle should be 8 to 10 years. In regards to bridges, there are 137 state and 370 municipal red listed bridges, which means that each one of those bridges has at least one structurally deficient problem. These red listed bridges pose a significant danger to anyone who uses them. For example, the Villas Bridge that connects Walpole and Bellows Falls, VT had to be closed because it is considered unsafe to drive or walk on. The closing forces about 4,500 people to find an alternate route.

House Bill 644 can reduce these safety concerns and boost the economy with its simple

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TO TOMORROW

Safety · Quality of Life · Economic Development

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Safer Road Partners

Associated General Contractors of NH

The Associated General Contractors is a non-profit trade organization of general contractors, subcontractors, and industry professionals dedicated to improving industry standards.

NH Good Roads Association

NH Good Roads Association is a non-profit trade organization established to encourage the development of a safe, efficient and environmentally sound highway transportation system.

Safety and Health Council of Northern New England

The Council's mission is to educate and promote safety & health policies, practices and procedures that prevent and mitigate human economic losses arising from unintended causes.

NH Association of Chiefs of Police

The Association secures a closer relationship among commanding officers all over the state, to encourage a cooperative relationship among all police officials.

NH Lodging & Restaurant Association

The Association is a non-partisan organization to promote, protect and educate the food service and lodging industries and to ensure positive business growth for our members.

Business & Industry Association

The Association is NH's leading business trade association. It advocates for business interests with state and federal legislators and regulators.

Employing Idle Reduction Technologies Can Reduce Costs

Last year the U.S. Congress approved an exemption from the 12% federal excise tax for idle reduction. In order to be qualified for this exemption, idle reduction devices must be EPA approved. The EPA has now released their list of approved idle reduction devices.

Employing an EPA approved idle reduction device can greatly reduce a company's costs. Idling for 6 to 8 hours a day times 250 days adds up to a lot in fuel costs. Additionally, idling can take a toll on the engine, requiring more maintenance, and shortening the life of the engine. The new EPA approved idle reduction devices can be used to power all of the trucks on board appliances, making rest times equally as comfortable as if the truck were idling.



More information on approved idle reduction devices, as well as benefits of the devices can be found on the Smartways website: www.epa.gov/smartways/index.htm, then looking in the transport section.

Smartways is a branch of the EPA focused on finding green transportation solutions.

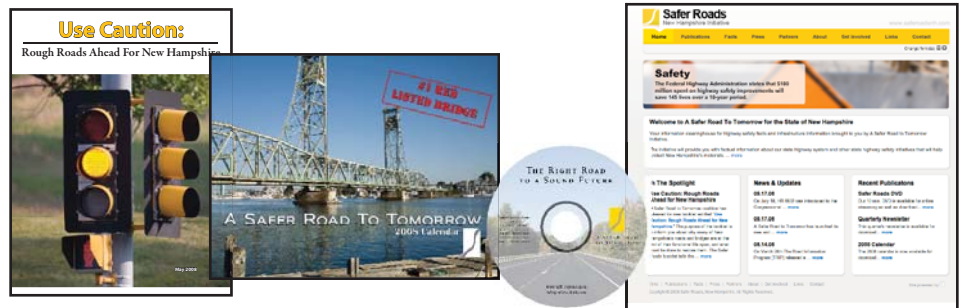
Safer Roads Campaign Leads To A Public Relations Award from AGC of America

At this year's AGC of America National Convention in San Diego, CA, AGC of NH was presented with the 2009 Public Relations Award for infrastructure. AGC of NH received the award for educating, along with the Safer Roads Coalition, New Hampshire citizens about the current state of New Hampshire's infrastructure through the Safer Road to Tomorrow Campaign. Glenn Cairns, AGC President; Ron Ciotti, AGC Director; and Gary Abbott, AGC Executive Vice President accepted the award on behalf of AGC of NH and Safer Roads.



The Safer Roads Coalition took strong action throughout 2008 to raise the public's awareness about the state of disrepair facing New Hampshire's roads and bridges. To draw in the public, Safer Roads used a four-pronged method, a calendar, a DVD, an informational booklet, and a quarterly newsletter. The calendar highlighted the deficiencies of the infrastructure, while the DVD, "The Right Road to a Sound Future," raised public awareness of the transportation issues in the state. The booklet, "Use Caution: Rough Roads Ahead for New Hampshire," illustrated the road and bridge problems in the state, and discussed possible funding options. Lastly, the newsletter keeps readers up to date on what's happening around New Hampshire in regards to its roads. In addition to the four public relations initiatives, Safer Roads also keeps an updated website (www.saferoadsnh.com). The website offers information on infrastructure and important road, bridge, and project information, as well as the calendar, DVD, and booklet that are all easily accessible.

The Safer Road 2008 campaign coincided with the beginning of the 2008 State and Federal Legislative sessions, which was the optimal time to reach out the public and spread the mission. In addition to mailings and website content, the campaign's mission was also shared on a person-person level. Gary Abbott, Executive Vice President of AGC of NH, took the time to pass along information during legislative hearings dealing with infrastructure.



BIA Holds Luncheon For Transportation Challenges And Opportunities For NH



The Business and Industry Association (BIA) will be holding a luncheon on

April 16th at 11:30 AM at the Holiday Inn in Concord to discuss the current state of New Hampshire's infrastructure. Topics will include the impact and timing

of the federal stimulus money on important infrastructure projects, as well as the future of the commuter rail in New Hampshire. U.S Representative Paul Hodes, New Hampshire Department of Transportation Commissioner George Campbell, State Representative David Campbell, and President of Pike Industries Christian Zimmerman have been confirmed as panelists for the event.

The cost to attend the event is \$35 for BIA and any of the Safer Road organizations and \$49 for all others. To register, call (603) 224-5388 ext. 116. Online registration is also available at www.acteva.com/go/nhbia. Registration will begin at 11:30 AM, followed by lunch at noon and the program at 12:30 PM.

Transferring From A Fuel Tax To A Vehicle Miles Traveled Fee

On February 26th, the bipartisan National Surface Transportation Infrastructure Financing Commission released its annual report, which unanimously recommended the gradual phase-out of federal motor fuel taxes. Instead of taxes, the commission would like to introduce a distance fee based on "vehicle miles traveled" (VMT). After evaluating numerous funding options, the commission decided that a fuel based user fee system is no longer the best option. With hybrid and electric cars on the road today, it leaves gasoline users paying for all infrastructure repairs. This way revenues can be collected regardless of what fuel is used to power a vehicle. Transferring to a VMT system will ensure that all users of the roads and bridges are sharing in the cost of repairs.



To accomplish their goal, the finance commission suggests a gradual ten year transition to a distance based user fee. Newer cars will come equipped with the devices needed to calculate the tax, while older cars will continue to pay the fuel tax until they are no longer on the road. To maintain funding while the transition is underway, the commission suggests raising the federal gasoline tax by 10 cents per gallon, and 15 cents per gallon for diesel fuel. As with all new ideas there are several issues of concern: one of the main problems is developing the technology for the VMT system. Creating a method to calculate the miles travelled in each taxing jurisdiction, and how this information would be transmitted to the tax collection agency, are large obstacles to get around. Evasion of the tax and privacy concerns should also be considered.

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plan. The main aspect of the bill, increasing the road toll, works by raising the gas tax five cents for the next three consecutive years. The diesel tax will have a fifteen cent increase spread out over ten years. This gradual raise will provide enough revenue to fund the Ten Year Highway Plan. The chart on the right, shows the difference between what HB 644 will accomplish and what the Governor's proposed budget will accomplish. From the money raised through the gas tax, 12% will go directly to the cities and towns. Currently, municipalities only receive funds for infrastructure repairs from the gas tax and property taxes; this bill reduces the need to raise property taxes in order to pay for infrastructure repairs. This bill will also create over 1,000 sustainable jobs; a fact that was stated by economist Dr. Lisa Shapiro during the hearing before the House Ways and Means Committee on March 13th.

PUBLIC WORKS RECOMMENDATIONS AS APPROVED BY THE HOUSE		GOVERNOR'S PROPOSALS FOR DOT	
Revenue Source	Annual State Income	Revenue Source	Annual State Income
HB 391 Sale of 1.6 mi. of I-95	FY 10 \$15.0 M FY 11 \$15.0 M Next 18 Years \$7.5 M per year	HB 391 Sale of 1.6 mi. of I-95	FY 10 \$15.0 M FY 11 \$15.0 M Next 18 Years \$7.5 M per year
HB 671 Attraction Signs	\$575,000	HB 671 Attraction Signs	\$575,000
HB 644 Raises the Road Toll 5 cents/ gal. for 3 yrs. • (cumulative) • by fiscal year	\$111 M (FY 10 - \$46M; FY 11 - \$83 M; FY 12 \$111 M)	SB 104 Raises driveway permits	\$614,250
		HB 670 Reduce EZ Pass Discount to 0 (killed by House)	\$3.4 M (not incl. in totals)
		SB 105 Overweight Fees	\$325,000
		HB 2 Various Toll Increases	\$22.3 M each yr.
		HB 2 Car registration increase by \$10	\$12 M
DOT Land Sales	\$2 M	DOT Land Sales	\$2 M
Revenue Above Will Accomplish the Following:		Revenue Above Will Accomplish the Following:	
Municipal Block Grant Aid - \$15 M Annually to cities & towns		Municipal Block Grant Aid - \$1.5 M Annually to cities & towns	
Balances DOT Budget through 2018 & beyond		Balances DOT Budget through 2012- capital & operating deficit of \$350 M in 2018	
Fully Funds I-93 Widening with \$300 M		\$300 M Shortfall for I-93 Widening	
State Paving Program (Annual) FY 09 - 777 miles (Stimulus Package) FYs 10-18 - 520 miles (8 yr. repaving cycle)		State Paving Program (Annual) FY 09 - 777 miles (Stimulus Package) FYs 10-18 - 260 miles (16 yr. repaving cycle)	
50 cents Toll Increase for only Hampton for I-95 Transfer		50 cents Toll Increase for only Hampton for I-95 Transfer	
No Other Toll Increases		Toll Increases: + 25 cents - Hampton Ramp, Hooksett Ramp, Rochester, Dover + 50 cents - Bedford, Hooksett Main Line	
Turnpike Toll Credits FY 10 Only • Hard Match FY 11-18 • \$25 M less in construction projects		Turnpike Toll Credits FY 10 - FY 18 • No Hard Match • \$225 M less in construction projects	
BOTH SIDES ASSUME:			
3% Expenditure Growth 2% Revenue Growth \$22 M Annual Expenditure Reduction No New Employees Through 2018			

New Hampshire cannot afford to let its infrastructure worsen, or it will cost more in the future. The gas tax is currently 12 cents lower than the national average, and has not been raised since 1991. This has led to revenue stagnation. This could be a result of when SUVs were popular; more revenue was coming in because the vehicles were using more fuel. Now, people are driving less and driving more fuel efficient cars, which amounts to less money going into the highway fund. Additionally, the total cost to the driver when the bill is fully implemented will not be exorbitant, it is estimated that the average driver will only see an increase of \$25 per each 5 cent increase. This is because the tax does not directly impact the overall price of fuel. Simply put, the gas tax is a user fee; anyone using New Hampshire roads will pay to help repair them.



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Plans For Economic Stimulus Money Are Determined

As economic stimulus money comes to New Hampshire, the state's government is putting much needed projects into action. The Department of Transportation (DOT) is receiving almost \$130 million for repair of the state's crumbling infrastructure. This money will help fix major problems with the roads and bridges, with \$15 million going directly to municipalities. Additionally, the Department of Environmental Services (DES) is getting about \$58 million for wastewater and drinking water improvements. President Obama said that 20% of the money should go to projects that include green infrastructure and energy efficient ideas.



This stimulus money has the potential to have a positive impact on New Hampshire as a whole. It could add approximately \$2.2 billion to the state's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), as well as create or sustain 18,000 jobs. It is estimated that 6,000 of those jobs will be on site construction jobs.

For a complete and up to date list, of how the stimulus money will be put to use, visit www.nh.gov/recovery.

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