

A SAFER ROAD TO TOMORROW

January 2009 Newsletter

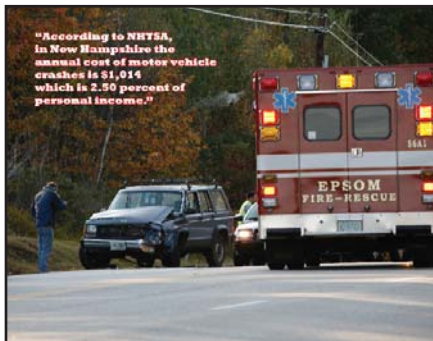
Safer Roads Releases 2009 Calendar



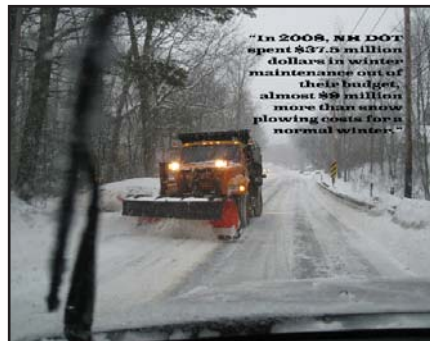
Safer Road's annual calendar was released in December. This year's calendar shows a variety of images from all over the state, from good and bad roads to tourism to safety, along with statistics that describe their relationship with the importance of infrastructure in the state. Included are a number of photos showing construction projects under way and even a comparison of a repaired municipal roadway that was a calendar cover photo a few years ago.

Our previous calendars mostly focused on the scope of deficiencies in the state's highways and bridges.

A large percentage of the state's roads have suffered over the years due to lack of sufficient funding, and are at the point where each year of neglect will result in a much more rapid rate of deterioration and higher repair costs. The 2009 calendar was sent in December to Safer Roads partners, elected officials, state agencies, and municipal road agents. It is our belief that if people understand the transportation problems, they can thoughtfully evaluate and contribute to effective solutions. For more information, please visit the Safer Roads website, www.saferoadsnh.com under "Publications."



June Caption: "According to NHTSA, in NH the annual cost of motor vehicle crashes is \$1,014 which is 2.50 percent of personal income."



December Caption: "In 2008, NH DOT spent \$37.5 million dollars in winter maintenance out of their budget, almost \$9 million more than snow plowing costs for a normal winter."



January Caption: "Americans rely almost exclusively on motor vehicles for mobility. Travel in private vehicles accounts for 88 percent of all person miles of travel."



August Caption: "Paving 1/2 inch overlay on one mile of interstate on both sides (3,800 tons) in April 2003 was \$136,800 whereas in August of 2008 it costs \$266,000."



A SAFER ROAD
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.

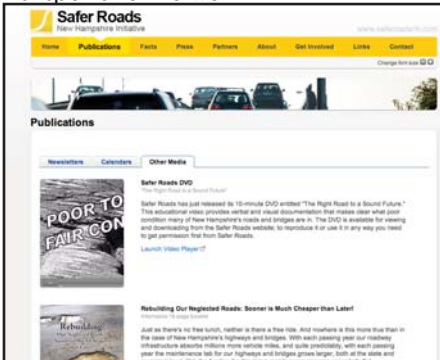
2009 Booklet

To Be Released Soon

A Safer Road to Tomorrow will soon be releasing its sequel to "Use Caution: Rough Roads ahead for New Hampshire." Look for the new booklet in January of 2009, when it will be released to correspond with the start of the 2009 legislative session.

This booklet is going to be different from the past ones. The previous two were factual warnings predicting that if the state's levels of funding and expenditures remained the same, New Hampshire's highway fund was heading for the red. This year's booklet is different in that it shows that the state is now actually in the red and at the critical stage where a financial plan has to be implemented.

Data for this year's booklet has been compiled from the Federal Highway Administration, TRIP (a national transportation research group), and the New Hampshire Department of Transportation. Information to be tentatively included will be a primer on how the state collects and distributes funds for infrastructure maintenance; facts that explain the decrease in revenue; efforts that have been made to retain or take back funds to support the ten year plan; and a financial plan that would allow the state's revenue to keep up with the needs of repairing and maintaining its transportation network.



Look for this booklet to be distributed in a few weeks. Our previous booklets, "Rebuilding Our Neglected Roads: Sooner is Much Cheaper than Later" and "Use Caution: Rough Roads Ahead for New Hampshire" are available on our website at <http://www.saferoadsnh.com> under "Publications."

NH Puts Its List Together for Economic Stimulus Plan



President-elect Barack Obama is pledging to put millions of Americans to work by building and repairing the nation's highways and bridges. In anticipation of Obama's stimulus plan, New Hampshire Department of Transportation Commissioner George Campbell put together a list of projects that could go to bid if the plan were to be passed in Congress. Below is the list summarizing what projects the Commissioner has recommended. The items in

the top section refer to highway and bridge repair projects in 2009. 2010 includes resurfacing roads throughout the state, and also North Country rail repairs which would cost \$8,500,000. "Additional Potential Projects" totaling \$300,000,000 consist of improvements to the New Hampshire Central Rail Road Line connecting Lowell, Nashua, and Manchester. \$220,000,000 would pay for double tracking, and \$80,000,000 would cover equipment purchases and operating costs.

ECONOMIC STIMULUS PROJECTS - DRAFT		
Project and Number	Description	Estimate
Salem-Manchester*	I-93 Exit ramps and bridges	\$30,000,000
Salem-Manchester*	I-93 ITS deployment	\$7,000,000
Lebanon	I-89 Exit 20 reconstruction	\$14,000,000
Epping-Exeter-Hampton	Rte 101 structural overlay	\$13,000,000
Lebanon*	US 4 bridge replacement-advance detour	\$4,500,000
Bedford-Manchester*	MAAR ramps and bridge construction	\$12,500,000
Bedford-Manchester	MAAR ramps and bridge construction	\$8,100,000
Bartlett-Gorham	NH 16 guard rail replacement	\$3,200,000
Portsmouth	High-level I-95 Piscataqua Bridge painting	\$11,000,000
Salem-Manchester	I-93 Brookdale Road bridge replacement	\$5,000,000
Salem-Manchester-Concord	I-93 fiber optic	\$6,800,000
Seabrook-Portsmouth	I-95 ITS deployment	\$4,000,000
Dover	NH 9 bridge replacement	\$4,700,000
Conway Bypass	Southern segment	\$55,000,000
Pavement Reconstruction	2009 - Statewide	\$14,300,000
	Subtotal 2009	\$193,100,000
Pavement Reconstruction	2010 - Statewide	\$28,900,000
North Country Rail Repair	St. Lawrence & Atlantic Line	\$8,500,000
	Subtotal 2010	\$37,400,000
Additional Potential Projects That May Require Longer Lead Time		
Lowell-Nashua-Manchester	Double tracking, purchase & operating	\$300,000,000
(*Indicates Top Priority)	Total	\$530,500,000

BIA's 2009 Priorities Include NH Infrastructure

Acting on input from roundtable discussions, surveys, and a committee study, the Business and Industry Association (BIA) has elevated transportation and the state's infrastructure to [key concerns for 2009](#).

BIA has developed 8 priorities for 2009 to promote a healthy business climate and robust

economic future for New Hampshire. The transportation initiatives involve educating policy leaders and the public about the impact of a public transportation system and the road and bridge network on the economy, and supporting efforts to increase federal transportation aid to the state.

Infrastructure

By Gary A. Abbott, AGC of NH Executive Vice President

Infrastructure – What does it mean? Well Webster's says it means:

- 1: the underlying foundation or basic framework (as of a system or organization)
- 2: the system of public works of a country, state, or region; also: the resources (as personnel, buildings, or equipment) required for an activity



No matter how you slice it, infrastructure is what we all rely on every day in New Hampshire from electrical lines, telephone, water and sewer, cable TV to roads and bridges.

OK, who pays for our infrastructure? Of course we do as citizens of the state. How we pay is multifaceted but it all comes down to one fundamental way – by attaching its associated costs to a service or product. For instance, the utilities get their costs back by charging their customers, same for municipal water suppliers and cable companies, etc., etc. The point: most of you know these costs go up every year, but that's not true for the highway system. It stays the same and hopes to cover its increased costs by having more revenue from increased utilization. When gas was inexpensive and car dealers sold Hummers and large SUVs, fuel consumption was going up and the state was able to hold its own. Well that was the 90s.

Today's reality is that consumption of gas and tolls have gone down. On top of that the federal government has realized that their funding allocation to the states for infrastructure has been exceeding their income. I don't know if this matters anymore with all the bailouts, but common sense tells me that problems are just a stone's throw away, knowing that 2009 is when Congress starts the discussion on the next federal highway reauthorization program, which allocates New Hampshire funding for the next six years.

On the state level, two years ago the state decided to bond \$60 million to keep the funding at the same level as the previous budget cycle while also utilizing the DOT reserve funds. For years the reserve has been studied by the legislature but now we know that any reserve will be gone by June 2009. Reality is that floods, ice storms, a tornado, and unprecedented winters with record snowfalls have compounded the need for repairs and maintenance. On top of all that, construction costs over the last three years have gone up by some 45 percent. What does this mean? Well, not enough funding for the state to continue the ten-year plan and operating DOT, which will lead to a larger problem at the current pace without a bailout (loan) or further delaying much-needed projects.

Now some people think the President-elect's stimulus plan is going to fund all the road and bridge projects that are on New Hampshire's ten-year plan and all the necessary repairs that have been accumulating. That's not true. The stimulus plan is intended to revive the economy – like CPR, it's not life support. It's a short-term solution that will help, but not the long-term solution the state needs.

OK, up come the choices. The easy choice is to ignore what is really happening, continue in the direction that has already begun: continue to close roads, plow less frequently, remove street lights, and start considering at what point we no will longer be able to repair certain roads.

Or, maybe the public has come around to understanding this issue as they listen to their towns struggle to keep up with maintenance (road repairs and plowing), and the NH Department of Transportation letting everyone know they are spending more than they are receiving each day. If we let this issue slide, it will only get worse as we have experienced over the last few years. The solution will not be easy, but it comes back to the fundamentals I started with. Develop a strategy to attach the needed cost to a service or product to develop a long-term solution.

WMUR Highlights Highway Needs

On Sunday, November 9th, New Hampshire's WMUR TV ran the story "As Motorists Drive Less, Highway Budgets Suffer." The idea for this story came from Safer Roads' DVD "A Safer Road to a Sound Future" that was sent to WMUR to inform them about the condition of the state's infrastructure. Not long after they received it, WMUR's Sean McDonald interviewed AGC's Gary Abbott.

During his interview, Gary explained to McDonald about the recent inflation of construction costs for materials necessary to maintain our roads and bridges and the shortfall in the revenue needed to fund their maintenance. There has been a 15 percent increase in costs in the past 12 months, as opposed to an average increase of 12.6 percent in the 4 previous years. Meanwhile, gas tax revenue has remained flat over the last 3 years, as compared to an average 2 percent growth in the prior 10 years ending in 2005. And while gas prices are going up, gas consumption is going down.

The story that WMUR ran emphasized the poor condition of New Hampshire's transportation network. McDonald used road and bridge footage from the Safer Roads DVD and statistics from his interview with Gary, as well



as interview snippets with Gary and with DOT Commissioner George Campbell. The Commissioner stated that "we're spending \$100,000 a day more than we're taking in for income. Since May 1, our traffic volume is down 7.9 percent. . . which means the state will likely get \$8 million less in revenue next fiscal year."

The 4-minute story very clearly showed crumbling bridges and poorly maintained and congested roads. Those images were paired with statistics reflecting insufficient income and increasing outlays, and a grim prognosis for the state's infrastructure if the levels of income and need continue to diverge.

If you would like to view the WMUR story, follow this link: www.wmur.com/video/17933966/index.html.



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FEEDBACK

Reprinted from Parade.com survey on November 30, 2008

Should Congress fix roads or give out rebate checks?

67% ROADS | 33% REBATES

FEEDBACK

*Reprinted from "The Road to Congress"
by the American Highway Users Alliance*

Did you know... when given detailed information about national highway and bridge funding needs, 71 percent of Americans support an increase in the gas tax.

Brought to you by the Safer Roads Partners:

