

# A SAFER ROAD TO TOMORROW

January 2010 Newsletter

## Safer Roads Releases 2010 Calendar

A Safer Road to Tomorrow released its annual calendar in December. This year's calendar depicts New Hampshire roads and bridges in both good and bad condition. Pictures of construction in action, tourism, and government show the role infrastructure plays in our everyday lives. Statistics and facts accompany the photos, describing infrastructure's role in more detail.

New Hampshire's roadways are continuing to suffer because of a lack of sufficient highway fund revenue. Every year that the roadways are not adequately maintained and repaired leads to an even greater need in the next year. This year, our state was fortunate enough to receive stimulus funds from the federal government. The extra funding helped New Hampshire pave more roads than in previous years and start delayed projects, but was not the long-term solution that is needed to maintain the roads and bridges.

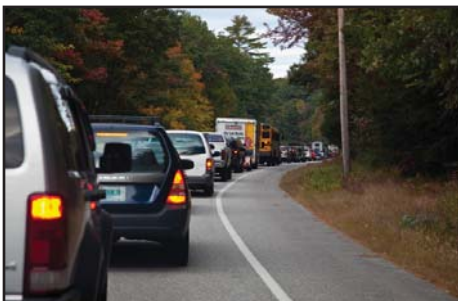
The 2010 calendar was sent to Safer Roads Partners, elected officials, state agencies, and municipal road agents. It is the coalition's belief that through education, the driving public can begin to understand how deficient roadways impact each part of their lives, leading them to contribute effective solutions to these problems. For more information, please visit the Safer Roads website at [www.saferoadsnh.com](http://www.saferoadsnh.com).



*"The Betterment Program has funded approx. 65 projects per year to remove/stablize rock cuts; erect snow fencing on bridges; provide traffic signal upgrades; reconstruct/improve intersections; replace large diameter drainage culverts; upgrade guardrail; repair crack seal, etc."*



*"Driving on roads in need of repair costs NH's motorists \$246 million annually - \$250 per driver - in extra vehicle operating costs, including accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional repair costs, increased fuel consumption, and tire wear."*



*"An average of 146 people were killed each year in crashes on NH's roads & highways from 2004 to 2008... Roadway design is an important factor in approx. one-third of fatal and serious traffic accidents."*



*"Bond payments for existing debt service are currently around \$27.5 million per year."*



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.

## Drivers Can Renew Driver's Licenses Online

A new program at the New Hampshire Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) will allow drivers to skip a trip to their local DMV, and renew their licenses online. Once every ten years, residents may choose to renew operator or motorcycle licenses using a new online system. People who choose the online program will be able to print out a temporary license to use in conjunction with the old license until their new license is mailed. After renewing a license once, a driver will need to visit a DMV to take a new photo and eye test. The renewal cost is still \$50 whether a person chooses the online method, or in person visit. There are a few rules and exceptions to the online system. Those eligible to use the system will receive a letter from the DMV outlining the procedure. The letter will also include a "renewal identification number", which is needed when using the online system. Those who cannot use the online renewal include: commercial driver licenses, residents who decline to have their pictures retained by the DMV, drivers over age 75, and any application or renewal that requires an exam or road test.

## Quarter of Teens Text While Driving



The Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project recently surveyed teens across the country about their driving habits.

What they found was an alarming rate of teens, ages 16-17, that text while driving, 26% to be exact. The survey also found that almost half of all U.S. teens have ridden in a vehicle where the driver was texting. This behavior leads to distracted driving, which can be especially dangerous for inexperienced drivers. In NH, texting while driving will become illegal on January 1, 2010. House Bill 34, which was passed in the 2009 Legislative Session, prohibits typing a text message and using two hands to type on or operate an electronic device while driving. The law does not apply when a person reads, selects, or enters a phone number or name into a wireless communication device when making a phone call. If a person is found to be in violation, they will be fined \$100.

## Better Bridges 2009 Survey Results Released

The 2009 Better Bridge Inventory, taken by *Better Roads Magazine*, has been released; and for another year, New Hampshire ranks in among the worst in the country. The inventory shows what percentage of bridges are structurally deficient/functionally obsolete (SD/FO) in America.

For the past two years, New Hampshire has stood in sixth place for worst municipal bridges, however, this year New Hampshire has moved into fifth place with 44%. Compared to last year's 45%, the state's municipal bridges are improving. Other states are improving their municipal bridges as well, which is the cause for the shift. Kentucky, who placed 3rd worst last year, improved from a dismal 49% to just 27% this year.



The chart below shows how New Hampshire ranks among the other New England states. New Hampshire outranks nearly all other New England states, aside from Rhode Island, for worst municipal bridges. However, Rhode Island data is from 2007, so their actual percentage may be higher or lower than the chart shows. The entire 2009 Better Bridge Inventory is available at <http://www.betterroads.com/better-bridges-bridge-inventory-2009-state-of-bridges/>.

**New England States Municipal Bridge Rankings**

State	Total Municipal Bridges	Total SD/FO	%
Rhode Island	167	87	52
<b>New Hampshire</b>	<b>959</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>44</b>
Maine	211	87	41
Massachusetts	1,551	587	38
Vermont	1,606	591	37
Connecticut	1,244	432	35

## Alternative Fuel and Funding the Highway Trust Fund



As alternative fuel vehicles become more prevalent on our roadways, state and federal government have

begun to look into how to charge those drivers for their use of the roads. Currently, many drivers pay a tax on gasoline. The revenue earned from that tax is put into the Highway Trust Fund and pays for roadway maintenance. It has been labeled as a user fee. The question is, how do you charge drivers of alternative fuel vehicles for their road usage? Their vehicles wear on the road just as gasoline powered vehicles do.

In NH, a study commission has been formed through House Bill 1515 to study alternative fuel vehicles. The commission will study the rules of the road and taxation associated with alternative fuels. The commission will then explore the desirability of establishing operating restrictions for alternative fuel vehicles, and methods of providing funds for their use of the highways. Safer Roads partner,

Associated General Contractors of NH, sent the committee information on alternative fuel vehicles for their consideration following Executive Vice President Gary Abbott's comments during a commission hearing. Several states have already begun to implement fees for drivers of alternative fuel vehicles. For example, in Missouri, owners or operators of alternative fuel vehicles are required to pay for an annual alternative fuel decal fee. The fee ranges from \$75 to \$1,000 based on the weight of the vehicle. New Mexico has also developed a way to charge alternative fuel vehicle operators by implementing an alternative fuel tax. The excise tax is at a rate of \$0.12 per gallon of alternative fuel. New Mexico also allows owners or operators of alternative fuel vehicles to pay an annual fee in lieu of the per gallon fee.

As New Hampshire's study commission continues to explore alternative fuels, they will be able to present ideas on how to fairly charge drivers of those vehicles for their usage of the roadways.

## Vehicle Manufacturers Offer a Wide Range of Alternative Fuel Vehicles

Alternative fuel vehicles are no longer a futuristic idea; there are many different models from the major vehicle manufacturers to choose from nowadays. The most common alternative fuel vehicle is the hybrid. A hybrid vehicle combines an electric motor with a traditional gasoline powered engine. In addition to hybrid electric, there are many other alternative fuels such as, compressed natural gas, propane, all electric, ethanol, and biodiesel.

Manufacturers are also exploring even more alternative fuels such as High Speed Advanced All-Electric Cars, Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicles, and Hydrogen Fuel Cell. Nissan has already developed a high speed all electric vehicle that will debut in limited numbers next year called the Leaf. Chevrolet is working on a plug in hybrid vehicle that will be released soon called the Volt. Lastly, Honda is working with hydrogen fuel cell technology, and has already begun to test it with the Honda FCX Clarity.

Below are some of the alternative fuel vehicles currently on the market.

<b>Compressed Natural Gas (CNG)</b>	<b>All Electric</b>	GMC Yukon 1500 2WD
CNG Honda Civic GX	Global Electric Motors GEM e4 (not highway legal)	Cadillac Escalade 2WD
<b>Propane</b>	Zenn Motor Company Zenn Car (not highway legal)	Jeep Commander 2WD
Ford F150 Pickup with Roush liquid injection propane	Miles ZX40S Advanced Design (not highway legal)	Lincoln Navigator 2WD
<b>Hybrid Electric</b>	Tesla Roadster (highway legal)	Chevrolet Silverado 2WD
Toyota Prius	<b>Ethanol</b>	Nissan Armada 2WD
Chevrolet Malibu Hybrid	Buick Lucerne	Chrysler Town & Country LX
Honda Civic Hybrid	Chevrolet Impala	Toyota Tundra 4WD
Nissan Altima Hybrid	Ford Crown Victoria (fleet only)	Ford F150 2WD
Toyota Camry Hybrid	Dodge Avenger SXT 2WD	Mitsubishi Raider Pickup 2WD
Ford Escape Hybrid FWD	C300 Sport Mercedes Benz	Chevrolet Suburban LTZ 1500 4WD
Chrysler Aspen Hybrid 4WD	Chrysler Sebring	Nissan Titan 2WD
Cadillac Escalade Hybrid 2WD	Lincoln Town Car	GMC Savana 1500 Passenger Van 2WD
Mazda Tribute Touring Hybrid 2WD	Chevrolet HHR FWD	Ford E-Series E150 Van
Toyota Highlander Hybrid 4WD	Dodge Durango	<b>Biodiesel</b>
Chevrolet Hybrid 2WD	Jeep Grand Cherokee Limited 2WD	Jeep Grand Cherokee Overland 2WD
Mercury Mariner Hybrid FWD	Ford Expedition 2WD	Dodge Ram 2500/3500 4WD Quad Cab
Chevrolet Silverado 1500 Crew Cab Hybrid 2WD	Chrysler Aspen FFV 2WD	Ford F-250 Super Duty Crew Cab 4WD
Dodge Durango Limited Hybrid 4WD	Chevrolet Avalanche LT1 2WD	Chevrolet Silverado 2500 HD 2WD
	Chevrolet Tahoe LT1 2WD	

## Safer Roads Partners Co-Sign Letter Advocating for Reauthorization



Associated General Contractors of NH and NH Good Roads, both partners in the A Safer Road to Tomorrow coalition, have co-signed a letter supporting the need for a six-year Reauthorization. AGC of America wrote a form letter, and asked multiple organizations to sign in support. The letter was sent to all members of Congress.

It is important that Congress hear from many types of organizations, not just the construction industry, that infrastructure is important, and that the need for a full Reauthorization is great. The letter emphasizes investment rather than spending, illustrating that investment in our infrastructure can go a long way towards stimulating our economy. From the letter, "Enactment of a multi-year transportation bill is a unique opportunity to address two major economic challenges by promoting job creation and incentivizing capital investment."

Members of Congress need to be reminded of the importance of the Reauthorization. Many other high profile issues have taken priority over Reauthorization, but an adequate infrastructure is key to our economy's success.



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## FEEDBACK

Reprinted from PRNewswire

### Did you know... 11% of vehicles have at least one bald tire

A recent survey, sponsored by the Rubber Manufacturers Association (RMA), showed that 11% of the 7,000 drivers surveyed had at least one bald tire. Even one bald tire can increase the risk of a crash, especially during inclement weather. The survey also found that 64% of car owners do not know how to check tread depth, and 9% never check tread depth. Tires in good condition are essential to safety while driving. As the winter months begin, it is important that drivers take the time to ensure their tires are in good condition, and are the proper tire for their car.



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