

# A SAFER ROAD TO TOMORROW

July 2008 Newsletter

## Expert Panel Discusses Current and Future Transportation Issues



On May 13, 2008, the Business and Industry Association, in partnership with the Associated General Contractors of New Hampshire, NH Motor Transport Association, NH Municipal Association, and A Safer Road to Tomorrow Coalition, presented "The Long and Winding Road:

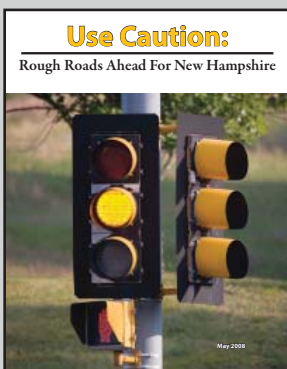
Transportation Planning in New Hampshire," a luncheon program focusing on New Hampshire's current and future highway and transportation infrastructure needs. The event took place at the Center of New Hampshire in Manchester.

The luncheon, which hosted about 70 attendees, included a panel of transportation experts from the construction industry, users of the system, and transportation policy makers from the New Hampshire Legislature and NH Department

of Transportation, which is the agency charged with planning and overseeing road and bridge construction in the state. Panelists included Senator Robert Letourneau, chair of the Senate Transportation Committee; Representative Candace Bouchard, chair of the House Public Works and Highways Committee; George Campbell, Jr., Commissioner of the NH Department of Transportation; and Christian Zimmermann, president of Pike Industries.

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## Safer Roads Releases "Use Caution: Rough Roads Ahead for New Hampshire"



"Use Caution: Rough Roads Ahead for New Hampshire" was released in May of this year by A Safer Road to Tomorrow. The mission of Safer Roads is to help educate New Hampshire residents and lawmakers about why increased demands on roads, highways, and bridges should be of concern to them, both now and in the future, and to ensure that appropriate investments are made in our roads, highways, and bridges as New Hampshire grows. The Safer Roads coalition is dedicated to actively educating the state's public and legislators about safety, quality of life, and economic impacts stemming from the condition of the state's infrastructure.

The "Caution" booklet is a sequel to the "Rebuilding Our Neglected Roads: Sooner is Much Cheaper than Later!" booklet that came out early in 2007. This new booklet again reaches out to educate the public to show that the current New Hampshire transportation plan will not take the state where it needs to be in the years ahead. Thus far, the booklet has been distributed at a legislative hearing on the Ten Year Transportation Improvement Plan, to the state legislature, state agencies, and associations.

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A SAFER ROAD  
TO TOMORROW

*Safety · Quality of Life · Economic Development*

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## Safer Road Partners

### Associated General Contractors of New Hampshire

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

### NH Good Roads Association

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

### 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.

### New Hampshire Association of Chiefs of Police

The Association secures a closer official and personal relationship among commanding officers of all New Hampshire, to encourage a cordial and cooperative relationship among all police officials.

### New Hampshire Lodging and Restaurant Association

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

## The State Needs to Address Safety: DOT Crash Report



The New Hampshire Department of Transportation is required by a SAFETEA-LU amendment to analyze crash data and submit an annual report that

describes at least 5 percent of the highways and intersections that have the highest occurrence of traffic crashes and have the most severe safety needs.

In the table below is data taken from New Hampshire's recent 2007 report on crashes for the years 2002 to 2005. The original data tabulates the 11 types of roads and intersections in New Hampshire with the top 20 accident locations for each type. The location with the highest accident rate (accidents as a function of traffic volume) or total (where the volume is not known) for its type becomes one of the top 5 percent - the 11 most dangerous places to drive in New Hampshire, the sites of 174 total vehicle crashes. For each location, the DOT has described

the problem with the site, potential remedies, and the estimated costs of the remedies. Some of the sites are rural, some are urban; some are secondary roads, some are highways. The various problems that DOT describes in the reports of these locations are: narrow road with limited sight distance; obstructions close to the edge of the pavement; sharp horizontal curves and blind hills; unsignalized intersections; poor, missing, or obscured signage; faded pavement markings; no backplates on traffic lights; lack of turning lanes; collision with wildlife.

Once the locations and problems have been identified, the next part of the process is to determine ways to mitigate these dangerous conditions and estimate the cost of doing so. The DOT suggests potential remedies, and assigns costs to each remedy. More than half of the problem areas have 2 possible solutions with two associated costs. The range for implementing all the mitigations runs from \$250,000 to \$831,000, some of the costlier solutions being construction of a roundabout, changing roadway geometry, and clearing and widening the roadway.

**Number One Crash Location by Road/Intersection Type Over Four Years (2002-2005)**

Type of Road/Intersection	City/Town, Street/Road/HWY	Total Crashes	Avg Crashes per year
Major arteries	Concord – between Airport Road and Concord/Pembroke line	44	11.00
Major arterial intersections	Manchester - Beech/Bridge Street	32	8.00
Minor arterial intersections	Manchester - Beech Street/Lake Avenue	23	5.75
Minor arteries	Manchester - Mammoth Road between Lucas Road and Manchester/Londonderry Line	20	5.00
Major collector intersections	Manchester - Chestnut Street/Salmon Street	16	4.00
Local intersections	Concord - D'Amante Drive/Louden Road	13	3.25
Interstate intersections	Londonderry - Interstate 93 North, Exit 5 off ramp	7	1.75
Interstate highways	Franconia – I-93 North, between exits 35 & 36 off ramps	6	1.50
Minor collector intersections	Brentwood - Southside Road/North Road	6	1.50
Major collector	Richmond - Route 32, between Tulley Brook Road and NH/Mass state line	4	1.00
Minor collector	Lempster - Allen Road, between Lempster Street and the Lempster/Acworth town line	3	.75

## Consumers Oppose McCain Gas Tax Holiday

Sen. John McCain (Ariz.), the Republican nominee for President, proposed the suspension of the 18.3-cent federal gasoline tax in an effort provide drivers with relief from high fuel prices this summer travel season. Unfortunately, the proposal would save most drivers less than \$30 for the entire season, but would cost states billions of dollars in lost highway construction, highway safety, and public transit funding, and force the elimination of hundreds of thousands of construction jobs across the country.

Senator McCain proposed to suspend the 18.3-cent Federal gas tax from Memorial Day to Labor Day. This tax cut would have serious repercussions. It would cut Highway Trust Fund revenues by almost \$3 billion per month. Under current-law funding, that will create an estimated \$12 billion shortfall in the Highway Trust Fund by the end of fiscal year 2009. It would eliminate approximately 300,000 family-wage, highway construction-related jobs. It would cut critical highway safety funding at a time when more than 42,000 people die and an additional 2.6 million people are injured on our highways each year. According to the Texas Transportation Institute, the annual cost of congestion is \$78 billion. The McCain proposal would eliminate necessary highway, highway safety, and transit infrastructure investments to help offset the enormous cost of congestion on our highways.

Subsequent to McCain's proposal, a Quinnipiac (CT) University nation-wide poll that ran from May 8th through 12th, reported that the majority of the 1,745 respondents said that a summer holiday from the gasoline tax is a bad idea. Overall, 49% held this view, while 41% thought it was a good idea. The party breakdown is: for Republicans 45%-46%, for Democrats 49%-42%, and for Independents 56%-38%.

It is a welcome surprise that even though Americans feel that rising gas prices are an impending crisis, they are aware of the necessity of the gas tax that maintains their roads and bridges.

*(Data taken from joint statements from the Federal Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, by Jim Berard, April 16, 2008)*

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The following highlights are from the “Use Caution: Rough Roads Ahead for New Hampshire” booklet.

\* \* \*

Many of New Hampshire’s roads and bridges are in poor condition. New Hampshire does inspect them periodically, and in the past, if a road or bridge needed work, it would be put in the state’s Ten Year Plan, and ordered in terms of priority. In the near future, this will become problematic, as all projects in the state’s program will be essential, making new projects less likely to be fixed.

One obstacle to keeping up with projects is that the expenses of maintaining New Hampshire’s infrastructure will continue to exceed the revenue collected for maintaining it. To illustrate this, the “Caution” booklet shows three charts that graph the “Ten Year Plan and Department of Transportation Operating Budget Forecast.” These charts show the TYP and DOT expenses exceeding revenue to create a cumulative shortfall of \$983,600,000 – almost \$1 billion – by 2018. In the following years, if transportation’s financial management stays at the status quo, the shortfall trend will continue.

There are two major reasons for decrease in revenue. First, a significant percentage of highway funding comes from gasoline and diesel tax revenue. The growth in this source of funding since 2004 has been minimal, and consequently has had little impact on addressing funding shortfalls. The other reason is the depletion of revenue that results from the practice of transferring money from Net Highway Fund Appropriations to other New Hampshire state agencies. A table in the “Caution” booklet shows where these transfers have gone historically and currently. Re-

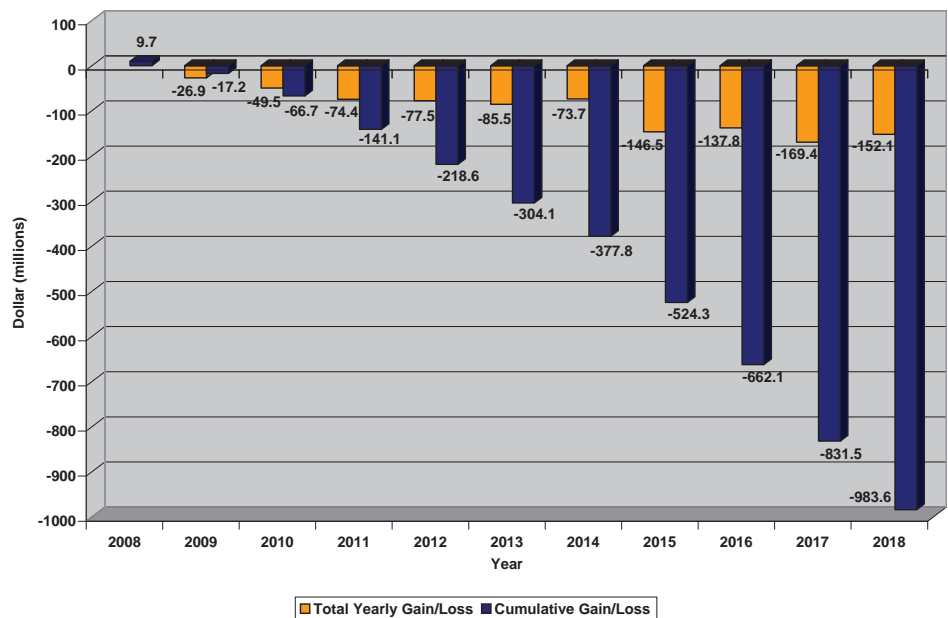
ducing transfers and eliminating unconstitutional transfers would be an effective way of applying more of New Hampshire’s road revenue toward the purposes for which it was intended.

The state has recently explored a few ways to raise additional funding to support New Hampshire’s infrastructure. General Obligation (GO) bonding and Federal Grant Anticipation Revenue (GARVEE) bonding have been researched. These are methods of borrowing money and repaying it over time with interest. The “Caution” booklet displays two tables to show the financial burden of each type of bonding. Another means of generating revenue is the gas tax, which has not been increased from 18¢ since 1992. An increase to that source of funding does not seem feasible at this point in time. A final way of raising revenue that New Hampshire is exploring is to tax vehicles based on miles driven rather than gallons of fuel purchased. The Oregon Mile Fee Concept proves a mileage fee is possible and

effective, but there is still the difficulty of fitting out both the vehicles and fueling stations to accommodate the concept.

With New Hampshire continuing to grow, strains on the transportation system will only get worse without careful planning and adequate funding. In order for the New Hampshire Transportation Plan to take the state where it needs to be, the current financial plan needs to change. The “Caution” booklet concludes by offering a feasible plan with measurable objectives – 8 steps that elected officials and lawmakers need to follow to develop a fiscally responsible transportation plan. “Use Caution: Rough Roads Ahead for New Hampshire” makes clear that failure to make a decision now and act on it will be even more costly in the future. To view a copy of this booklet, please visit [www.saferoadsnh.com](http://www.saferoadsnh.com) and click the “Media” section.

Combined Yearly & Cumulative Gain/Loss



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Panelists addressed and discussed the current state of New Hampshire’s infrastructure, the planning needed to ensure adequate road

and bridge networks for the future, the role of public transit and commuter rail, and the ways to finance infrastructure improvements and upgrades to the state’s transportation system.

Christian Zimmermann, president of Pike Industries, Inc., said “Properly maintaining and expanding the state’s highway system will take leadership and politicians willing to stand up and say what needs to be done and why.”





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### Safest State for 2008

#### No 1: New Hampshire

New Hampshire is ranked No. 1 for the first time thanks to impressively low crime across the board. It boasts the nation's lowest murder rate and second-lowest aggravated assault and burglary rates.

Rankings in Crime (out of 50)

- Assault: 49
- Burglary: 49
- Murder: 50
- Motor Vehicle Theft: 47
- Rape: 39
- Robbery: 43



*The results of CQ Press's annual Crime State Rankings are in. Join us as we reveal which 15 states were ranked as the safest for 2008.*

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