

NACE News



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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Susan G. Miller, P.E., County Engineer, Freeborn County, MN

NACE 2009 is just around the corner and I look forward to seeing many of you as we meet in Peoria, Illinois. IACE has selected the theme "Think Anew. Act Anew". At no time are those words from the past a more important directive for the future. Last month I reflected on the initiatives and accomplishments of NACE over the past year. As this is my last official article serving you as President, I thought this a good opportunity to continue to look at the future.

First, I wish Chris Bauserman and all the Executive Committee a prosperous year as NACE looks forward to a new vision for authorizing a national transportation policy. Let me just say a few words about Chris as he looks forward to his presidential term. Chris is a consummate professional and always considerate of all sides of any given issue. He has a vision for keeping the needs of the county system a vibrant element of our transportation system and will serve you all well over the coming months. Never forget though that YOU are the most effective advocate as you reach out to your legislators. There are very few engineers or road managers in our elected ranks and a trusted resource can become invaluable to our elected officials at the local, state or federal level.

Many times as I traveled, the question was posed concerning the support I had from my

Board, especially given that I am from a very rural county. To this, I could only comment that I am fortunate to work in a County that recognizes the value of professional association and involvement and encouraged my participation as a voice for the challenges counties face, especially rural counties. I am also very blessed to have an amazing group of professionals to work with on a day in and day out basis. They truly have made this opportunity possible because as we all know, the work at home comes first.

As a NACE organization, I do feel strongly that our personality types don't necessarily mesh with that of a promoter. Things like the NACo Peer to Peer Safety Exchange and the number of NACE members seated on the NACo Transportation Steering Committee definitely has developed our relationship with county commissioners across the nation, but as I have observed NACo agendas with a limited transportation element or watched reaction as transportation legislative issues emerge, I wonder if we are doing enough. Counties will continue to face tight economic times that may limit travel and involvement in national activities, but to be on the edge of innovation and leaders in managing one of the counties largest resources we must stay actively engaged. There is no more critical moment in time for that involvement than now

with most local tax levies at the crest of what taxpayer can afford and state budgets in no position to help, sound federal transportation needs to highlight that most trips begin or end on a county highway. The roads and bridges we maintain are a vital link to the safety of our communities, our economic vitality and our quality of life whether in a large urban county or a small, rural county.

This has been an incredible year both personally and professionally. It has been an honor to serve with the NACE Executive Board and the NACE Board of Directors and I thank each of you for your extraordinary commitment of your time and leadership talent. I would be remiss if I did not also thank the crack professional NACE staff; Executive Director, Tony Giancola, Assistant Executive Director, Bonnie West, and Office Manager, Angela Toledo, who work tirelessly and many times thanklessly every day to keep NACE connected.

And most importantly, I want to take one last opportunity to thank you all for what you do every day to serve those in your communities. Truly the strength of NACE is built on the strong foundation of our 31 state affiliates and the dedication and commitment of you. Best wishes to you all as you "Think Anew ~ Act Anew".

NACE PRESIDENT SUE MILLER JOINS LOCAL GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES AT WHITE HOUSE BRIEFING ON AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT (ARRA)

At the request of Vice President Biden, NACE President Sue Miller, Freeborn County (MN) Engineer, joined with other local government representatives in a White House Recovery and Reinvestment Act implementation conference on March 18th. Vice President Biden is heading up the oversight of the Recovery Act's implementation. Additionally, recently Freeborn County, MN and the Minnesota DOT announced the first joint transportation project in the state to benefit from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Free-

born County's project consisted of a concrete overlay for Freeborn County State Aid Highway 46, from Arena Road in Albert Lea to Alden while the MnDOT project included a 12 mile resurfacing of Interstate 90 from the west limits of Alden to Highway 13 near Albert Lea. Total estimates for the joint project was \$17.6 million. Low bidder was Ulland Brothers, Inc. "When talks with MnDOT began, we discovered that our projects geographically were located very close to one another," said Christopher Shoff, D. C., Freeborn County

Chair. "We began discussing the possibility of submitting them as a joint project, allowing greater economies of scale and less impacts on the travelling public."

**Looking forward to seeing you
at NACE 2009 in Peoria, IL
See photos in upcoming
May issue of NACE News!**

FY 2009 APPROPRIATIONS TRANSPORTATION APPROPRIATIONS APPROVED IN OMNIBUS BILL

President Barack Obama recently signed the FY 2009 omnibus appropriations bill into law, providing \$10.1 billion for transit and \$40.7 billion for highways. For highways, the House bill provides somewhat less obligation authority than FY 2008. That is because last year the obligation limitation of \$40.216 billion was supplemented by a one-time infusion of \$1 billion in bridge money.

OBAMA & BIDEN VISIT U.S. DOT TO RELEASE RECOVERY FUNDING

President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden joined U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood on March 2nd to address more than 500 U.S. Department of Transportation employees and to formally release \$27.5 billion in funding for highway and bridge projects provided by the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act. The transportation apportionments were issued to states and other parties eight days ahead of the deadline.

"This investment in highways will create or save 150,000 jobs by the end of next year, most of them in the private sector," Obama said at U.S. DOT headquarters in Washington. "The jobs that we're creating are good jobs that pay more than average; jobs grinding asphalt and paving roads, filling potholes, making street signs, repairing stop lights, and replacing guardrails." In an effort to show how large of an impact this transportation package will have, Obama said: "Transportation projects that were once on hold are now starting again - as part of the largest new investment in America's infrastructure since President Eisenhower built the Interstate Highway System." More than 100 transportation contracts funded by recovery dollars have already been awarded, with another 200 to be awarded in upcoming weeks. These projects vary greatly from state to state. For example, the first contract in Maryland was a resurfacing of a one-mile stretch of Maryland 650 in Montgomery County. Kansas, on the other hand, will be using its recovery dollars on larger-scale highway widening projects while Texas is planning to use most of its funds for tollways. "We pledge to you, Mr. President and Mr. Vice President, that the hard-working men and women in this department are doing everything in their power to put these funds into the hands of the states so that work can begin," LaHood said during the event. "There will be total transparency. We know that you require that. Any taxpayer, any day, any minute, can click into www.recovery.gov and find out where their hard-earned dollars are being spent. No earmarks. No boondoggles. Taxpayer money being spent to put people to work." During the ceremony, LaHood unveiled logos for the newly formed U.S. DOT committee overseeing the recovery spending called the TIGER Team (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery). TIGER is responsible for ensuring complete transparency and accountability as well as verifying that all disbursement requirements are being followed.

BUDGET CHANGE COULD CRIPPLE MULTI-YEAR TRANSPORTATION CONTRACTING LEADERS WARN

In a letter which commended President Barack Obama for his "expressed support for significant increased investment in transportation infrastructure," eight major transportation and construction organizations also warned the President that a proposal contained in the Administration's budget request to eliminate multi-year contract authority, "would undermine the very fabric of the financing mechanisms" for transportation at the very time that the nation is looking to transportation investments to help rebuild the economy. Contract authority is a little-known budget keeping mechanism which allows states to plan and execute projects that take several years for completion. It is based upon the fact that transportation programs are funded by dedicated user fees, such as the motor fuel tax, rather than by annual appropriations. The contract authority solution for multi-year capital investment was first enacted in 1956 for highways and later extended to transit and aviation. In a letter to President Barack Obama, the transportation leaders state, "The predictability that contract authority provides is essential for states and local governments to make long term commitments to major transportation investment projects. In 1998 with the passage of the TEA 21 legislation, Congress recognized this unique budget situation and established funding guarantees tied to the trust funds." However, the budget outline released by the Obama Administration proposes to eliminate contract authority, for the purposes of greater transparency in budgeting. The organizations state, "By subjecting long term transportation investment to the vagaries of the annual appropriations process, the proposed scorekeeping change strikes at the heart of the job creation goals you have set for these programs by undermining the ability to make multi-year commitments." Signing the letter were the following organizations: AASHTO; the AGC; the American Highway Users Alliance; the ARTBA; the American Trucking Associations; the NAPA; the National Stone, Sand and Gravel Association; and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

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\$545 BILLION NEEDED FOR NATION'S TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS

Enactment of the FY 2010 budget resolution "will be the starting point as the House considers the new surface transportation authorization bill," Kansas Secretary of Transportation, Deb Miller testified before the House Budget Committee. Appearing on behalf of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, Miller outlined a six-year, multi-modal transportation investment that includes:

- o \$375 billion for highways;
- o \$93 billion for transit;
- o \$42 billion for freight, from outside the Highway Trust Fund; and
- o \$35 billion for intercity passenger rail, also from outside the Highway Trust Fund.

Miller noted that even before addressing authorization, however, the Congress must ensure that the Highway Trust Fund has sufficient revenue to fund the current program. An \$8 billion transfer made by Congress last September may not be sufficient to last through the year, she said.

The problem worsens next year, she said, noting, "Revenues are flowing into the Highway Trust Fund at a rate billions of dollars below the current rate of obligations for future spending. Come October 1, unless Congress closes this gap, the highway program will face a cutback of \$20 billion or more for FY 2010. The transit program will face a \$5 billion reduction one year later. It is vital, at a minimum, to sustain the current highway and transit programs at no less than their current levels of funding."

NACE COMMITTEES TO MEET ON SUNDAY, APRIL 19, 2009 IN PEORIA

For those members arriving in time, please note the following NACE committees who will be meeting on Sunday Morning April 19th.

8:30 - 11:30 am - Structures Committee - Cheminee Room Pere Marquette
 Chaired by Mark Servi, Barron County, WI. The main item on the agenda will be the short span standards research that is being conducted at West Virginia University. Dr. Karl Barth will be presenting at the meeting - his main objective for attending is to get some feedback from county engineers. The goal is to develop a standard for short span steel bridges that directly meets the needs of the counties. It is extremely important that as much feedback as possible at this stage of his research. Ultimately, this research will provide the counties with a more cost effective bridge.

10:00 - 11:30 am - Legislative Committee - Illinois Room Pere Marquette
 Chaired by Jim Piekarczyk, Kankakee County, IL. The committee will receive a briefing by Bob Fogel, NACo Senior Legislative Director and be reviewing the NACE legislative positions for further adjustment and additions.

10 - 11:30 am - Membership Committee - Peoria Room Pere Marquette
 Chaired by Ramon Gavarrete, Highland County, FL. This committee will be discussing a membership promotion DVD and several other items.

10 - 11:30 am - Constitution and By-laws Committee - Board Room Pere Marquette
 Chaired by Kent Cash, Cowlitz County, WA. The committee will be reviewing several items for potential Constitution changes.



NACE Executive Advisory Committee at NACo Leg. Conference, March 2009: Wayne Sullivan, Chris Bauserman, Dale Wegner, Phil Demery, Ron Young, Keith Berndt, Sue Miller, Tom Stoner, Jon Rice and George Webb.

NATIONAL WORK ZONE AWARENESS WEEK APRIL 6 - 10, 2009

In honor of National Work Zone Awareness Week April 6-10, 2009, American Traffic Safety Services Foundation is offering Ribbons & Pins for sale. This Year's Theme: "Drive to Survive - Our Future is Riding On It." Please order your Ribbons & Pins to wear in recognition for roadway workers who put their lives on the line every day to make the nation's highway safer for all of us. We appreciate your support and 100% of all Ribbons & Pins proceeds go to support the annual fund.

It's not too late to order your 2009 Work Zone Safety Calendar - The Foundation is proud to feature the winners of the 2008 poster contest in the "Life Behind the Cones and Barrels Work Zone Safety" calendar. A great gift for anyone!

To order your orange ribbons and lapel pins or to order your 2009 Work Zone Safety Calendars. See: <http://www.atssa.com/> (under The Foundation section, then go to bottom).



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MICHIGAN UPDATE

By Jon Rice, Engineer-Manager, Kent County Road Commission, MI and NACE Northeast Region Vice President

The County Road Association of Michigan (CRAM) held their 101st Annual conference meeting on March 3-5, 2009 and more than 260 representatives from 74 counties met in Lansing to discuss current issues facing Michigan's county roads. Those attending got to hear firsthand updates on the status of efforts to increase transportation funding, as well as updates on the new federal stimulus program (AARA). A variety of sessions provided tips and techniques for benchmarking performance, reducing health care costs, and preserving pavements. Legal issues including ADA, utility relocation costs, abandonment, roads leading to waters, and incompatibility of office were discussed by road commission attorneys. In addition to reports from the House and Senate, more than 60 legislators attended the Wednesday night Legislative Reception. Several other legislators met with their road commissions over meals. While joining us for breakfast, MDOT Director Kirk Stuedle shared the latest news on the federal stimulus plan and also a recently prepared Power-Point presentation entitled Transportation Funding Crisis. Director Stuedle offered the services of MDOT's area Transportation Service Center if you need support in presenting this program locally.

This year three CRAMy Awards were presented in recognition of outstanding public relations activities: **Alcona Safety Round-up** - Planned to raise safety awareness prior to the beginning of the summer construction season, this event is a planned media day held in

conjunction with National Work Zone Safety Week. This successful program raised awareness and allowed the public to see what efforts are being made to make work zones safer for both motorists and workers. **Genesee Miller Road Reconstruction Project** - Faced with the challenge of how to accommodate over two million shoppers/motorists and 300 retailers along 2.5 miles of Miller Road during the reconstruction planned for 2008, Genesee CRC came up with a multi-faceted communications/outreach plan. This plan resulted in a significant increase of trust in the road commission's sensitivity to concerns and the mitigation of the impact of major projects. **Roscommon "Shake Your Mailbox Day"** - With ongoing negative public reaction to mailbox and post damage during winter operations, Roscommon's safety committee proposed a program to get the public involved in a positive way. More than 20,000 fliers were distributed with a goal of having homeowners identify and repair unstable mailboxes prior to winter.

Stimulus Update: Federal Transportation Stimulus Funds have been allocated between MDOT, Counties, and Cities in Michigan for project selection. Michigan statute require that 25% of all Federal Aid transportation funds must be distributed to County and City agencies for their use on Federal Aid routes under their jurisdiction.

Counties and Cities have been allocated \$211 Million for projects and they have already been selected and added to the State-wide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) to meet the required guidelines. A number of Counties will have projects under contract within the first 120 day of the program.

NACo LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

By Ron Young, Engineer-Manager, Alcona County Road Commission and NACo Director for NACE

This year's NACo Legislative Conference was held March 7-11 in Washington DC with a theme of "Restore the Partnership" a campaign to restore the Federal-County Partnership. As NACE representative to the NACo Board of Directors, I had the opportunity to participate in a number of activities that may be of interest to NACE members.

Sunday morning's Transportation Steering Committee meeting included a report by Bill Kennedy, a county commissioner from Yellowstone County, Billings Montana and member of the National Surface Transportation Infrastructure Financing Commission. He gave an overview of the commission's final report "Paving Our Way - A New Framework for Transportation Finance" as released on February 26, 2009. With two years of study the commission concluded that: there is no easy solution to insufficient funding, current funding structures relying on gas taxes are not sustainable, and federal funding based on more direct forms of "user pay" pay charges for each mile driven (commonly referred to as vehicle miles traveled or VMT) emerged as the consensus choice for future funding. Additional information on this informative report can be found at: <http://financecommission.dot.gov>.

New Transportation resolutions were also considered as follows: A Resolution on Rule Making Establishing Minimum Levels of Retroreflectivity for Pavement Marking would have NACo seek to have Congress repeal

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"NACo Leg. Conference" continued.

mandated standards for retroreflectivity for pavement markings and urge county officials to comment in opposition to any USDOT rulemaking on mandatory standards of retroreflectivity. The major concern is that retroreflectivity standards could not be consistently met in frost and snow regions and if implemented would be an unfunded mandate. A Resolution on Transportation Trust Funds seeks to retain the current budgetary treatment for the Highway Trust Fund and the Airport and Airways Trust Fund. NACo would oppose the Administration's FY2020 budget proposal to change the way Trust Funds are treated by ending the current "firewall" protections and making Trust Funds subject to discretionary spending rather than mandatory spending.

The Affiliates Council also met on Sunday. NACE is one of some twenty plus affiliate organizations within NACo. Meetings of the Affiliates Council are held in conjunction with major NACo conferences to report on affiliate activities and discuss common concerns. It was discussed that a draft report of the NACo Task Force on Governance and Structure is recommending a review of the criteria established for recognizing affiliates. Currently an organization with as few as 50 members can be recognized as a NACo affiliate with no requirement for broad geographic representation of those members. NACE reported 1900 members in 31 affiliate state organizations with Montana being the newest NACE state affiliate organization.

The NACo Board of Directors met on Monday morning. The agenda included the

introduction of 11 new board members, a presentation by a delegation from the City of Harbin China, various committee reports and a presentation by the White House Intergovernmental Affairs Director.

The Finance Committee reviewed 2008 financial statements noting that overall income was lower than budget as the economy took its toll on investments, conference revenue, and sponsorships. The Committee also discussed the recession's effect on the 2009 budget, where NACo is seeing decreases in membership and conference revenues. NACo staff is indentifying areas where expenses can be reduced. The committee reaffirmed that NACo dues would not increase for 2010 and will continue at the 2007 level.

Cecilia Munoz, Deputy Assistant to the President and Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, spoke to the Board about the goals of her office and the Obama Administration. She wants her office to "cement the relationship among levels of government and make sure that we have the kind of partnership that produces results." Munoz encouraged discussion and dialogue with county officials. For her office to be most effective, she said, "We need to know what you know."

The Rural Action Caucus (RAC) report noted that their priority issues are implementation of the Farm Bill, Highway Bill Reauthorization, Restoring the Partnership for County Health Care Costs Act, health care in rural areas, CDBG, interoperability/telecommunications, and support of NACo President Don Stapley's initiatives. RAC is also focusing on implementation of the stimulus package.

The Membership Committee report noted that "We are in tough times." The updated membership numbers provided to the Board were: 2,393 member counties, 187 delinquents with dues of \$707,000, 21 new members with dues of \$15,000. NACo will see some increases in cancellations this year including some large counties, but membership is actively working to save as many members as possible through direct contact by fellow officials, state association executive directors, and staff.

Valarie Jarrett, senior advisor to President Obama, spoke at Monday's opening general session. She related her longstanding ties to NACo staff and her enthusiasm for her new job working with local governments. "I feel like I'm home again."

Chuck Todd, NBC News political director, shared at the opening general session his observations about the new climate in Washington. Todd said it is easy to do President Barack Obama's job when times are good, but the real test comes in handling moments of crisis. In his first 50 days in office Obama has tackled a myriad of issues, prompting some to ask if the new administration is trying to do

too much. Todd wryly noted that if the administration hadn't taken on a full slate, the question would be "why weren't they doing more?" He provided an interesting analysis of the importance of any administrations first year in office.

Tuesday morning's general session was highlighted by speeches from three Obama Cabinet secretaries; Housing and Urban Development Secretary, Shaun Donovan, Interior Secretary, Ken Salazar, and Energy Secretary, Steven Chu.

Energy Secretary, Steven Chu, noted that The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act includes \$3 billion to promote state and local initiatives through the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant program. To receive funding, counties with more than 200,000 residents can apply for certain grants directly to DOE. Smaller counties will be eligible to receive funding through their states and all counties can vie for \$400 million in competitive funds directly from DOE, he added. For more information, visit:

www.doe.gov/recovery.

The money will support home energy audits, weatherization programs and energy-efficiency retrofits- such as making traffic lights and street lights more energy efficient. He said President Obama has set a goal of doubling the federal investment in the sciences.

Ken Salazar, secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior, announced full funding for Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) through FY 2012, a decision that would not have happened without the help of NACo. He outlined five priorities the department will focus on under the Obama Administration: energy; global warming; youth involvement in the conservation corps; Native American communities; and water issues.

These presentations were further evidence of NACo's success in advancing the "Restore the Partnership Campaign." Due to work obligations and flight arrangements my participation in this year's legislative conference ended after the Tuesday morning general session. However, even so I found it to be a successful and interesting conference.

The NACo 2009 Annual Conference is scheduled for July 24-28 in Davidson County (Nashville), Tennessee.

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**FREE ONE-DAY SAFETY WORKSHOP WILL BE HELD AT NACE 2009:
DEVELOPING COUNTY SOLUTIONS TO IMPROVE RURAL ROAD SAFETY**

This free one-day peer to peer workshop will be held on Thursday April 23, 2009 from 9:30 am to 5:00 pm at the Hotel Pere Marquette, Peoria IL. Co-sponsored by the National Association of Counties, FHWA and NACE its goal is to present best practices in safety programs currently being accomplished nationwide at the county level and teaming county elected and professional officials who want to improve their safety programs. Registration is free but limited. For more information, contact James Davenport, National Association of Counties at jdavenpo@naco.org or Tony Giancola, NACE Executive Director at agiancol@naco.org. To register for this workshop, print/complete the form (from NACE website): http://www.naco.org/NACETemplate.cfm?Section=NACE_Events&template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=29767

NACE 2009 - TRAVEL INFORMATION - SEE YOU IN PEORIA!

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AIRPORT: The Hotel offers complimentary Airport Shuttle Transportation. Greater Peoria Regional Airport - Airport code: PIA. See: www.flypia.com/

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March-April 2009 Issue

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