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June 2015

President's Report

By Duane Ratermann, PE
Knox County, Illinois



If you were to ask any of the NACE Past Presidents what the highlights of their presidency were, I'm sure the majority would say the visits they made to our state affiliates. It's a special opportunity to get to know our membership and see how each affiliate operates.

I've been able to make two such visits June to the affiliates in Wisconsin and Washington. In fact, I'm composing this article on my flight home from Seattle. It's the first time I have written anything at 39,000 feet above sea-level.

The Wisconsin County Highway Association (WCHA) held their Summer Road School on June 8-10 at the Chula Vista Resort in the Wisconsin Dells. My last visit to the Dells was on a family vacation in 2008. That happened to be the year Wisconsin experienced severe flooding in early

June and water topped a roadway embankment leading to a catastrophic failure of the embankment and the waters of Lake Delton went rushing into the Wisconsin River.

It was quite an experience to be able to walk on the floor of Lake Delton a few days after the catastrophe. I'm happy to report the embankment has been repaired and Lake Delton has filled back to capacity.

The 2015 Summer Road School was attended by a combination of Highway Commissioners and Elected Committee Members with an attendance of close to 500, as well as nearly 50 exhibitors. With two highway worker fatalities already this year in Wisconsin, much of the discussion at the conference focused on work zone safety.

Jessica Monahan, NACO Associate Legislative Director, gave an update on legislative activities in Washington, DC. I was very fortunate to be able to participate in the golf outing with nearly 150 other golfers. The Chula Vista Resort, Wisconsin Dells, is the chosen site for the 2018 NACE Annual Conference. It will be a fantastic destination. "Thanks" to the WCHA and especially Mark Servi, NACE Past-President, for hosting us and showing us a great time.

The Washington State Association of County Engineers (WSACE) held their annual conference in Leavenworth on June 16-18. The conference this year was unique for the WSACE because the County Road Advisory Board, or CRAB, will be celebrating its 50th anniversary in July. A large part of the conference program focused on the history and future of CRAB. CRAB was created by the Washington State Legislature in 1965 to provide statutory oversight of the 39 county road departments.

The President of WSACE is responsible for selecting the location of the annual conference the year of his presidency. Grant Morgan, Garfield County, chose Leavenworth due to its central location in the state, but more importantly because there were no locations in his county that could host the conference. Garfield County, according to the 2010 census data, has a population around 2,300 people. Leavenworth, known as Washington's Bavarian Village, is a beautiful town up in the mountains about two and a half hours east of the Seattle metropolitan area. There is a real Austrian/German theme to the shops and restaurants. Each morning at breakfast we were serenaded by an elderly gentleman playing the alphorn.

At the close of the conference, WSACE held a planning meeting for NACE 2016. I must say, they are well on their way in the planning process and I encourage all of you to mark your calendars for April 24-28, 2016, in Tacoma. It promises to be a great one!

If you've never been to the Pacific Northwest, I strongly encourage you to add a few extra days to your trip to see the sights. It is some of the most scenic country I have ever seen. Diane and I were able to enjoy a two day drive around the Olympic Peninsula before we returned home. Special thanks to the WSACE and especially Brian Stacy, NACE President-Elect, for chauffeuring us around and making it a memorable visit.

I would like to wish each one of you a safe and enjoyable 4th of July. It's always a bonus when we get to celebrate holidays over a three day weekend. We're very fortunate to live in the greatest country in the world, but let us not forget what it took to get us here.

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MAP-21 Reauthorization Passed Out of Senate EPW Committee

By Jessica Monahan, NACo Associate Legislative Director

On June 24, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee passed out of committee S. 1647, the Developing a Reliable and Innovative Vision for the Economy (DRIVE) Act – a six year reauthorization of federal highway programs at increased funding levels from MAP-21. In total, the DRIVE Act provides \$277.4 billion in spending for highway programs, which represents an average growth of \$5.3 billion per year. The funding levels set by the bill would require an additional \$92 billion in revenue beyond current projected receipts for the Highway Trust Fund.

While the overall growth in spending is significant, most of the additional funding would be targeted to a new National Freight Program and a program similar to the current TIGER grant program called “Assistance for Major Projects.”

NACo is still working on an in-depth analysis and comparison of the bill to current law, but below you will find a brief overview of some key provisions that impact counties and the infrastructure they own.

Overview / General Information

Release and Mark Up

On June 23, the leadership of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee released legislation that would reauthorize the highway title of MAP-21 called the Developing a Reliable and Innovative Vision for the Economy (DRIVE) Act. The Committee marked up the legislation the following morning with minimal changes and few amendments accepted.

Length / Funding Levels

The DRIVE Act is a six year bill at increased funding levels from MAP-21. In total, the bill provides \$277.4 billion in spending for highway programs, which represents an average growth of \$5.3 billion per year.

Funding Required

The funding levels set by the bill would require an additional \$92 billion in revenue beyond current projected receipts for the Highway Trust Fund, a funding gap that would need to be closed before the bill could pass the Senate.

Key Themes

1) long-term funding certainty; 2) prioritizing investments on the interstate system and infrastructure critical to the movement of freight; and 3) greater efficiency in the project delivery process.

Specific Provisions of Interest to Counties

Surface Transportation Program (STP)

STP receives an average of \$10.7 billion per year, an annual increase of more than \$600 million from MAP-21. Currently, 50 percent of the program is suballocated to local areas. The DRIVE Act would increase the suballocated portion to 55 percent.

Funding for Locally Owned Bridges

Under the STP program, 15 percent of funding is set aside for “bridges off the National Highway System” – which represents about 75 percent of the National Bridge Inventory and includes on-system and off-system bridges owned by counties. In FY 2016, that amount would be approximately \$1.5 billion and would grow to \$1.7 billion by FY 2021. Under MAP-21, states are required to set aside for off-system bridges an amount equivalent to 15 percent of their FY 2009 Highway Bridge Program apportionment, which totals \$777 million annually. While the overall funding for county owned bridges would increase, it's important to note that the DRIVE Act would not require that any of that set aside be spent on off-system bridges.

Bridge Bundling

Encourages states to use their federal dollars to bundle bridge projects.

High Risk Rural Roads

Changes the special rule for High Risk Rural Roads by targeting states with the highest rural road fatality rates and focusing on the need to “decrease” rural road fatality rates rather than “not increase” (this will result in more states having to spend safety dollars on rural roads).

Transportation Alternatives



Provides \$850 million annually for the Transportation Alternatives Program, an increase of \$30 million per year and requires that states obligate 100 percent of the program's funding for transportation alternative projects, rather than the 50 percent they are required to obligate under MAP-21.

Unpaved Public Roads

Allows states with a significant portion of unpaved or gravel roads to elect not to collect fundamental data elements for those roads. This provision could have significant impacts on the overall distribution of federal aid in rural areas, particularly the distribution of Highway Safety Improvement Program Dollars and required investments on high risk rural roads.

National Freight Program

Authorizes a total of \$13.4 billion for a new National Freight Program to make investments that strengthen the nation's movement of freight, including investments on locally owned infrastructure in rural and urban areas.

Assistance to Major Projects Program

Authorizes a total of \$2.4 billion to fund major highway projects, which is similar to the TIGER program in theory but not in practice. The major difference between this program and the TIGER program is the requirement that the Federal Highway Administrator compile and submit to Congress a list of eligible projects for their consideration and ultimate selection – bringing back a similar but reformed approach to earmarking highway dollars.

Data Reporting on Highway Trust Fund Investments

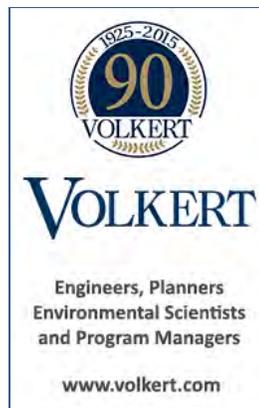
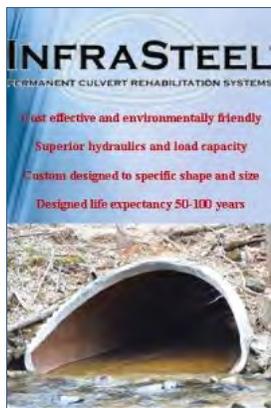
The bill would require the U.S. Department of Transportation to publish on its website details about how highway dollars are being obligated within each state. The data would reveal how much states are obligating for state-owned vs. locally-owned projects.

Next Steps and Process

The bill is far from a homerun for counties but it's important to keep in mind that it's only the beginning of the reauthorization process. With your help, we are hopeful that we can work with members of the House and Senate to better represent the interests of counties in a final reauthorization package. Please continue to encourage your congressional delegation to support our priorities for reauthorization and direct their staff to me for further information and assistance.

Read how you can influence a permanent fix to the [Highway Trust Fund](#).

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June 2015

Pierce County Buzzing About Successful US Open Championship

People around the world got to see what makes Pierce County special!

When you're at **NACE 2016**
in Tacoma, Washington,
hit the links at
Chambers Bay!

*Home of the 2015
US Open Championship!*

If you can judge an event by the number of polo shirts, the amount of sand left in one's shoes, or the number of eager spectators lining up in a merchandise tent waiting to hand over their money, the 115th US Open at Chambers Bay has been an unquestionable success.

Somewhere, John Ladenburg smiles.

It was hard not to feel as though you were witnessing something special Thursday when the tournament commenced at long last, after three days of practice rounds and seven years of waiting.

If there's an event in the recent history of Pierce County that's been more hyped than this year's US Open, I can't think of one. Perhaps most impressive: The tournament seems to be living up to the billing.

"I don't believe it is possible to overvalue how important this event and this investment will be to our county and region," Pierce County councilman Rick Talbert told me.

It's a common sentiment. Here we are, on our second glass of top-shelf champagne, in the middle of the roaring party. The eyes of the world are upon us, and the warmth of the lights feel spectacular. The attention affirms what we've felt about our home all along — that we live in a world-class location that much of the world has yet to discover.

Was it worth it?

By "it," of course, I mean the millions that went into building a championship-caliber, county-owned golf course where a dug-out gravel mine once stood. While former Pierce County Executive Ladenburg—the single-minded visionary credited with making Chambers Bay a reality—has spent the last week or more on a public victory tour, the scoffs and charged political debates over "Ladenburg Links" aren't far enough in the past to be completely forgotten.

"Absolutely, it was worth it," Pierce County Executive Pat McCarthy tells me without hesitation, referring to the financial benefits and the civic pride having the US Open in our backyard has stoked. "We're feeling pretty good about it."

If projections of a \$140 million boost to the regional economy prove accurate, it'll be hard not to feel good about the course. If hordes of out-of-town golfers now put playing Chambers Bay on their bucket lists, as some national commenters are suggesting, or this is the first of many major tournaments at the course, the project will truly be the gift that keeps on giving.

"I think the investment and risk will be repaid this week. And the future holds tremendous returns on the citizens' and the ratepayers' investment," Talbert said. Talbert, however, wasn't on the Pierce County Council when the votes were being taken on Chambers Bay. Steilacoom Republican Dick Muri, who represented Pierce County's District 6 from 2003 to 2012, was. These days, Muri is a freshman state representative for the 28th District, representing, among other places, University Place and Chambers Bay.

While Muri wasn't the only local lawmaker to raise legitimate questions about how the county would pay for Chambers Bay, he was the only council member to vote against spending sewer money for amenities like an entry road and other infrastructure for the golf course. His objections were largely ideological: He would have preferred the project be a public-private partnership.

Muri certainly wasn't alone in the early years as Chambers Bay failed to generate enough revenue to pay for itself. More recently, however, Muri tells me he's spent the past three months, binoculars and beer in hand, watching US Open facilities being built at Chambers Bay from his daughter's Steilacoom balcony.

People across the world got to see what makes Pierce County special by watching the Fox Sports broadcast, which included aerial shots by the Goodyear blimp. Cameras panned over Mount Rainier, the Narrows bridges and other local landmarks.

In the end, Jordan Spieth survives when Dustin Johnson's putts go awry. The gallery roars provided updates, all over Chambers Bay, as the 115th United States Open championship boiled down to 75 minutes of high drama.

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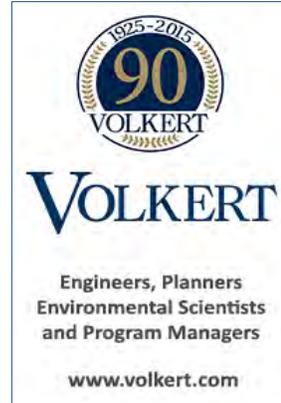


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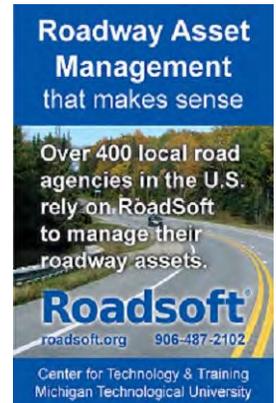


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June 2015

County Commissioner Calls for Congressional Action on Transportation Funding



On June 24 Renville County, Minn., Commissioner Bob Fox testified before the House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Highways and Transit, calling on Congress to invest in locally-owned transportation infrastructure by fixing the Highway Trust Fund and passing a long-term reauthorization of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21). In addition to outlining specific legislative recommendations, Fox described counties' major role in the nation's transportation system and identified challenges rural counties face with the ongoing uncertainty surrounding federal funding.

"The challenges facing rural America underscore the need for Congress to invest in transportation infrastructure," said Fox.

[Renville County, Minn. Commissioner Bob Fox testifies before the House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Highways and Transit.](#)

"We have a limited ability to generate revenue to meet the increasing demands on our roads and bridges and the increasing costs of transportation projects. The transportation networks running through rural America feed the national economy and require national investment."

Testifying on behalf of the National Association of Counties (NACo), Fox described counties' pivotal role in strengthening the nation's transportation system. Counties own 39 percent of the National Bridge Inventory and 45 percent of the nation's roads, including 28 percent of the federal-aid highway system.

"Most of these roads and bridges are in rural America, where transportation infrastructure serves as a lifeline for our residents and plays a critical role in the movement of goods to market," said Fox.

[Watch Commissioner Fox's Full Testimony](#)

[Read The Full Testimony](#)

Fox explained that three million road miles and 450,000 bridges in rural America are essential to the movement of agricultural products, manufacturing goods and energy resources. Rural infrastructure has come under greater strain to accommodate the demands of these modernizing industries and higher yields of production. At the same time, rural counties are

seeing construction, materials and labor costs that far outpace the rate of general inflation.

"The longer we wait to pass a long-term reauthorization bill, the more damage our infrastructure sustains and the more expensive projects become. Rural counties cannot afford to wait any longer," said Fox.

In addition to recommending that Congress fix the Highway Trust Fund and pass a long-term reauthorization bill, Fox outlined specific recommendations that support rural transportation. These recommendations included:

Congress should make more federal highway funding available for locally-owned infrastructure. Counties and other local governments own 78 percent of the nation's road miles, including 43 percent of federal-aid highways and half of the National Bridge Inventory. Despite this responsibility, MAP-21 reduced the funding available to locally-owned highways and bridges by 30 percent.

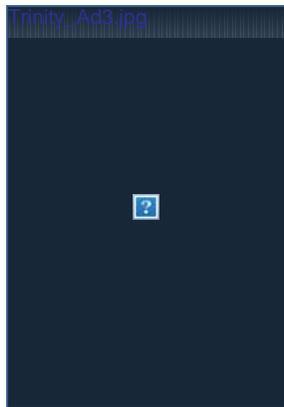
Congress should restore funding to bridges off the National Highway System (NHS). MAP-21 significantly reduced the funding available for more than 75 percent of the nation's bridge inventory — bridges that do not have NHS designation. NACo continues to work with a bipartisan group of lawmakers on the Support for Bridges Act (S. 1370).

Congress should better address safety on "high risk rural roads" in the reauthorization of MAP-21. With the fatality rate on rural roads being about 2.5 times higher than on urban roads, road safety is a top priority for the nation's counties.

Congress should increase the role of counties in statewide transportation planning. Local leaders understand the specific local needs and are well-positioned to provide greater input on projects that impact their communities.

"Rural roads and bridges are critical to the economic and social well-being of communities across the country," Fox said. "We cannot build a vibrant national economy without investing in rural transportation infrastructure."

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US Drivers Top 3 Trillion Miles



Estimates released in March by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) show that Americans drove nearly 3.02 trillion miles in 2014, the highest point since 2007 and the second-highest since data collection began 79 years ago, fueling calls for greater investment in transportation infrastructure to accommodate growing volumes of traffic.

The new data reaffirm projections made by U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx in "Beyond Traffic," his 30-year vision for transportation, which shows significant increases in gridlock nationwide unless changes are made in the near-term.

"Americans are driving their cars at near-record levels, and being stuck in traffic is costing drivers an average of nearly five days a year," said Secretary Foxx. "To ensure

this problem doesn't get worse, greater innovations and investments are needed. We can't keep treating America's 21st-century traffic needs with 20th-century solutions."

According to FHWA's latest "Traffic Volume Trends" report – a monthly estimate of U.S. road travel – Americans drove an estimated 3.015 trillion miles last year, roughly the same distance as 323 round trips from Earth to Pluto.

Drivers in December 2014 logged 251.4 billion miles, the highest level for any December since data collection began in 1939. At 5 percent higher than the previous December, it was the year's biggest single-month increase and the nation's tenth consecutive month of VMT growth.

Traffic in the South Gulf – a block of eight states including Texas and Kentucky – rose to nearly 49.1 billion vehicle miles traveled (VMT), a gain of 6.4 percent over the previous December and the tenth consecutive month of increased traffic for the region.

All states recorded traffic increases in December. At 10.5 percent, Indiana led the nation with the largest single-state traffic increase compared to the same month a year earlier, followed closely by Oklahoma at 9.3 percent and Montana at 8 percent.

"Data like these are critical to helping federal and state transportation leaders understand the challenges facing American drivers," said Deputy Federal Highway Administrator Gregory Nadeau. "The nation's growing demand on roads and bridges underscores what we have been saying – increased investment is needed if we are to keep our roads from becoming parking lots."

[Review](#) the VMT data in FHWA's "Traffic Volume Trends" reports, which are based on information collected from more than 2,000 road-mounted sensors nationwide.

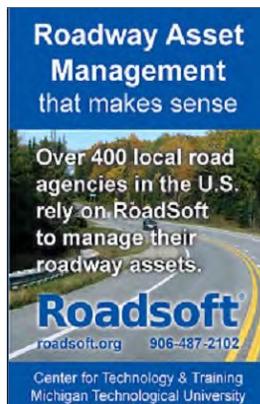
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Douglas County's End of Day Trivia

Get the answer right, go home early.

By Lisa Harris

Larry Wilson, assistant operations manager for Douglas County, Kansas, Public Works Department, mixes a little training and fun at the end of some of his crew's work days. As the crew gathers to close out the day (about 3:10 for a workday that ends at 3:30) he will convene a "trivia" session, asking questions related to road work and some "off topic" questions to mix it up. He usually will give the crew members many opportunities to get the answer right, letting them know if they are getting closer to the right answer or not. The first person that says the right answer gets to go home early. It's a good way to share information and build morale.

Wilson started "trivia" more than a decade ago. He came up with the idea when he realized that he himself did not know many of the basic facts about his county and road work that he thought he should know, like miles of gravel road, for example. Or the number of lane miles the county maintains. Or how many people are employed in the public works department. He said: "When I became a supervisor, and I still did not know some of those things; well, then I really looked stupid." So he started looking things up, and writing them down.

Pretty soon Wilson realized these same things would be good for his crew to know as well. So, every once in awhile they have a trivia session, usually on a Friday or a rainy day. Wilson said everyone on the crew participates—"because who wouldn't want to go home early?" But they don't have to participate.

Wilson said the trivia sessions work well in sharing useful information and having a little fun, with no impact on the county or the crew. "No time is lost; the crew is done for the day. Everyone is gathered and waiting to go home," he said. There's no negative for an employee, either—no one is put on the spot. Everyone elects to play.

The employees don't know the questions ahead of time, although some questions are repeated from previous trivia sessions. Wilson keeps hundreds of questions in a notebook, and adds to them.

The trivia questions have evolved over time. Wilson started with basic questions that he considers important to the job, and then he started mixing in other topics that are fun but not related to public works. See sidebar below for some examples of trivia questions.

"There's no down side to doing this," Wilson said. "It provides a teaching moment." He has noticed that when he repeats questions from past trivia sessions, if crew members don't know the exact answer (like how many counties in Kansas have a county-township road system), they guess closer each time. Each trivia session has maybe 20 questions, give or take. Wilson is quick to acknowledge that he has support for this activity. "I am real fortunate that my management lets me do this,"

he said.

"The trivia exercise is a great idea," said Douglas County public works director Keith Browning. "It helps the public's perception of our department when employees know and can relate facts about the road system and the county in general. Having a well informed work force benefits everyone, and having a little fun at the same time can't help but boost morale."

Author's note: I attended a trivia session on February 6 to see Wilson and his crew in action. It was great fun. There was a lot of camaraderie in the room—ribbing each other and cheering each other on. Wilson was kidded as well. Some winners swaggered out the door. There were many smiles and laughs. A lot of good information was shared, and all employees got to go home a little early—some earlier than others. What's not to like about that?

Wilson is happy to talk with you about trivia and can be reached at (785) 979-0765. He might even give a trivia session at your location in exchange for a tour of your shop and a little travel money to get there.

How good are YOU at trivia? Try answering the questions below from Wilson off the top of your head. Turn to page 3 to see how you did. Have fun!

Some Examples of Trivia Questions

1. How far does the bottom of a stop sign need to be from the surface of a road?
2. How far in advance should a stop-ahead sign be installed from a stop sign?
3. What does "MUTCD" stand for and what does its name tell you about it?
4. How can you tell the difference between a Type 1, Type 2, and Type 3 barricade?
5. What is the end of a duck's bill called?

6. What is the name of the ball on top of a flagpole?
7. How can you tell what color eggs a chicken will lay?
8. What year was the first Mustang made?

Answers

1— 5 ft (7 ft in town); 2— 750 ft; 3— Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. A book that provides uniform standards and guidance for installing traffic control devices in the U.S.; 4— The number of boards: 1, 2 or 3; 5— A bean; 6— A truck; 7— By the color of its ears; 8— 1964.

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Contact Congress to Fix the Highway Trust Fund



NACE members are needed to keep pressure on lawmakers to fix the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) before the latest extension expires July 31.

Jessica Monahan, NACo Associate Legislative Director, has put together some additional information and talking points to help with messaging.

View the NACo [Highway Trust Fund Toolkit](#)

Highway Trust Fund Info and Talking Points

How does the trust fund work?

The Highway Trust Fund was established by Congress in 1956 as a dedicated funding source for highway construction and maintenance projects. In 1982, Congress created a second account within the Highway Trust Fund to pay for mass transit capital costs. Currently, the Highway Trust Fund collects 18.4 cents per gallon of gasoline, a rate that was set in 1993, along with 24.4 cents per gallon tax on diesel and other transportation fees to pay for federal highway, transit and transportation safety programs. The revenue collected is divided between the Highway and Mass Transit Accounts, with 83.9 percent of gas tax revenue going to the Highway Account and 15.5 percent going to the Mass Transit Account. Diesel fuel tax revenue is similarly divided with 87.9 percent going to the Highway Account and 11.7 percent going to the Mass Transit Account.

What caused this crisis?

Several factors have contributed to the current funding crisis facing the Highway Trust Fund. One of those reasons is that spending has outpaced revenue coming into the trust fund since 2000, primarily due to the dynamics plaguing the federal gas tax. Since the gas tax constitutes almost two-thirds of the Highway Trust Fund's total revenues, the rate at which Americans purchase and use gasoline greatly influences the solvency of the trust fund. With greater fuel efficiency standards and more gasoline-independent vehicles on the roads, the rate of gasoline consumption has decreased. In addition, the last time the gas tax was raised occurred over two decades ago and it was not indexed to inflation at that time. So, while construction and labor costs increased at a rate that exceeded regular inflation, the gas tax remained fixed. As a result, those 18.4 cents per gallon have decreased in purchasing power. If the gas tax had been indexed in 1993, it would be equal to 29 cents today or in other words, the trust fund has lost about 38 percent of its purchasing power. In sum, we are trying to run a 2015 transportation system on 1993 dollars that are not being collected at a rate to meet demand.

How much money do we need?

The amount of money needed to keep the Highway Trust Fund solvent for the near and long-term varies based projected spending levels. For example, if Congress merely tried to maintain spending at current levels with an increase for inflation, the Highway Trust Fund would need an additional \$170 billion over the next 10 years. In order to fill this gap, Congress would need to increase the taxes on motor fuels (both gas and diesel) by about 10 cents per gallon. Raising the federal gas tax 10 cents per gallon would cost the average driver about \$1 per week or \$4 per month.

However, the Department of Transportation has estimated that simply maintaining the current performance of nation's surface transportation system would require at least \$13 billion per year more in spending and that funding for all highway projects whose benefits exceeded their costs would require even more spending—up to \$83 billion per year more than current spending.

How are counties impacted?

Uncertainty in the Highway Trust Fund means counties cannot invest in the kinds of infrastructure projects that benefit families, businesses and the economy. In fact, many counties have already started operating under a "worst-case scenario," in which the Highway Trust Fund is unable to reimburse the cost for projects. In numerous counties, current projects have been stalled and projects in counties' long-term plans are facing an unclear future due to the uncertainty in future federal investment. This uncertainty stymies job growth and makes transportation projects more costly for counties and less dependable and safe for families and businesses.

How does the Gas Tax compare then and now?

In 1993, the price of a gallon of gas averaged \$1.12. Today, it averages \$2.62, but just last year the average price was much higher at \$3.53.

A new car averaged \$12,750 in 1993. In 2014, the average new car cost \$30,748.

A loaf of bread in 1993 would have cost \$0.75. In 2014, it would have cost about \$1.38.

According to the Oregon Department of Transportation, the cost of concrete has doubled, the cost of rebar has more than doubled, and the cost of Asphalt has nearly tripled since 1993. This means that, given equal funding, for every mile of road that Oregon could build in 1993, they could only build half a mile in 2014. This is the reality for states and counties nationwide struggling with aging infrastructure

What is the economic impact of inaction?

Transportation costs are expected to increase roughly \$430 billion between now and 2020. The American Society of Civil Engineers estimates that the economic impact of America's failing transportation infrastructure by 2020 will cost:

American Families: \$1,060 per year for each family's budget in lost earnings and increased spending.

American Businesses: Between 877,000 and 1.111 million jobs and \$430 billion in increased transportation costs.

American Economy: US exports would drop by \$28 billion and America's GDP would underperform by \$897 billion.

What is the personal impact of inaction?

American families and businesses are already paying for our inadequate infrastructure. Driving on roads in need of repair costs motorists \$94 billion a year in extra vehicle repairs and operating costs, equaling about \$444 per motorist. In addition, the average American commuter spends 38 hours a year stuck in traffic. The more time we sit in traffic, the more we spend on gas. These costs are going to only increase if Congress fails provide long-term funding certainty.

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June 2015

Texas Floods Cause Significant Road Damage

By Charlie Ban
NACo Senior Writer NACo Senior Writer



The Rakowitz Bridge in Wilson County, Texas has been judged to be structurally deficient, following May flooding, but trucks are removing barricades and crossing it anyway. Photo courtesy of Wilson County, Texas Office of Emergency Management.

A month's worth of brutal weather in May has battered and soaked eastern Texas to the point where Gov. Greg Abbott (R) has issued emergency disaster declarations for 94 counties, and President Obama has made additional federal funding available to local governments in seven counties. Tornadoes, heavy rains and flooding have killed at least 27 people and caused untold millions in damage to private and municipal property. \

Damage evaluations and estimates continue in many of those 94 counties, but as of June 10, 26 counties contacted by County News that had completed estimates reported more than \$58 million in damage to county facilities, culverts, roads and bridges, with transportation infrastructure the top tally. Many others are waiting for waters to recede to complete their inspections.

The state Division of Emergency Management cited the evaluations still in progress when declining to release the total value of claims filed by county governments.

Bruce Barr, Emergency and Floodplain Management program manager with the Texas Association of Counties, said this flood reversed the balance of public assistance and individual assistance eligibility.

"We usually see about twice as many public assistance grants than individual assistance, but this time it's flipped," he said. "There's just not as much public property being damaged."

Most of San Augustine County's limestone and glauconite roads lost at least two inches of material, and there are very few paved roads in the county. The jury is still out on how much repairing them will cost, because they make up the majority of road surfaces in the county. The county's damage estimate was incomplete as of June 9. "We've lost at least one bridge," said Judge Samye Johnson. "We're a pretty poor little county, so this is going to be significant for us."

Representatives from several counties have noted that most of their culverts will have to be replaced. In urban counties, the cities typically suffered the most damage. Austin, for example, took the brunt of the blows and left the rest of Travis County relatively unscathed. More than \$56 million of Dallas County's reported \$61 million in damage was in Dallas (\$50 million alone) and three smaller cities.

In Wilson County, most of the damage has been concentrated in one precinct, where Commissioner Paul Pfeil has been surveying it to add to the county's report. One bridge was damaged to the point where local, state and federal evaluations deemed it structurally deficient. Pfeil has had the 20-foot-long bridge barricaded because flood waters have disintegrated the ground around one end of the span. Almost daily, those barricades have been removed, and Pfeil suspects the culprits are truck drivers for oil drilling companies.

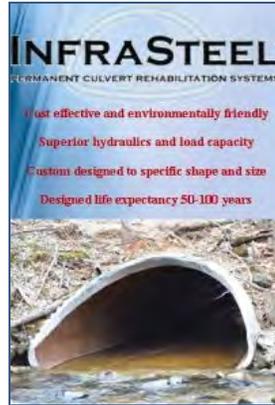
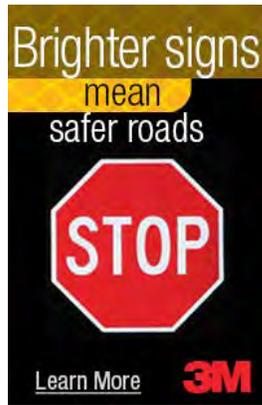
"There's a storage facility on one side of the bridge and a detour adds at least 15 miles to the trip each way," he said. "One side of the bridge is fine, but there's a risk that someone on the other side is going to fall off or damage it even more."

Though nobody has caught a truck driver in the act of removing the barricades, county personnel have seen those trucks on the road leading to the bridge. Williamson County Emergency Services Director John Snead said his crews have been hard at work patching dams that were in danger of being breached. "If we don't take care of this now, we'll have a whole other flood if it breaches," he said.

Wise County Judge J.D. Clark said though, based FEMA findings so far, he expected his county's total to come in around \$900,000 for roads; 27 private homes in the county had been destroyed by tornados. "It puts this road damage in perspective," he said. "We'll be alright, but our residents have a long way to go. Our loss is so minor compared to theirs."

Reprinted from NACo County News, June 15 issue.

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DOT Updates Highway Trust Fund Ticker

On June 19, DOT updated its Highway Trust Fund ticker. The highway account is supposed to go below its critical \$4 billion balance by the end of July and will be insolvent the first week of September if lawmakers don't intervene.

As the two graphs indicate, both the Highway Account and the Mass Transit Account of the Highway Trust Fund are nearing insolvency.

View the [HTF Ticker](#).

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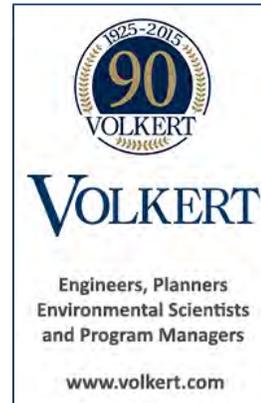


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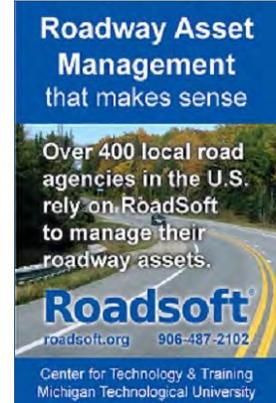


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June 2015

Bridging the Gap

Bipartisan Legislation Seeks to Repair Funding Cuts to Locally Owned Transportation Assets

By **Jessica Monahan**
NACo Associate Legislative Director



Last month, Sens. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) and Bob Casey (D-Pa.) introduced S. 1370, the Support for Bridges Act, bipartisan legislation to increase funding for locally owned transportation infrastructure.

While unlikely to pass as a standalone bill, the legislation serves as a marker for the reauthorization of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21). The bill would change the federal highway program and yield several benefits for counties.

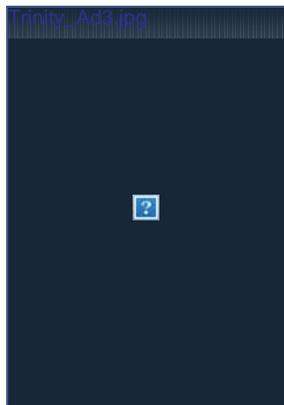
First, it continues the set-aside for off-system bridges under the Surface Transportation Program (STP) and clarifies that designated funding for bridges not on the federal-aid highway system must come out of the state's 50 percent portion of the STP rather than the 50 percent that is sub-allocated to local areas.

Second, the legislation would make more funding available for STP to support on-system and off-system bridges, along with other eligible projects. These changes aim to address what occurred when MAP-21 eliminated the old Highway Bridge Program and shifted funding away from locally owned infrastructure, which had a particularly devastating effect on funding for county-owned bridges.

Overall, these changes under MAP-21 caused a 30 percent decrease in the funding available for the types of county infrastructure that's eligible for federal aid. S.1370 would restore that 30 percent cut and increase the funding that gets sub-allocated to local areas while keeping STP and its funding flexible so states and local leaders can prioritize projects with the greatest need.

Although this bill is unlikely to pass on its own, securing support for it as a proposal for MAP-21 reauthorization is critical. Therefore, NACo is asking its members to contact their senators and request they cosponsor S. 1370, the Support for Bridges Act.

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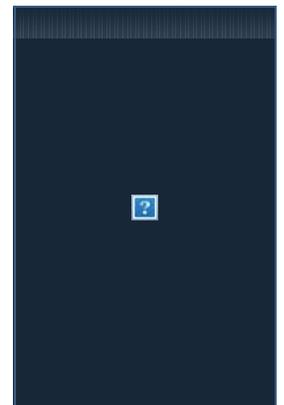
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Final WOTUS Rule Comes Up Short

By Julie Ufner
NACo Associate Legislative Director

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) announced their final Clean Water Rule: Definition of Waters of the United States (WOTUS) rule, which would increase the number of streams and wetlands that are protected under the Clean Water Act (CWA). The rule, announced May 27, will take effect in 60 days after its publication in the Federal Register.

NACo Executive Director Matt Chase said the rule falls short of adding clarity to protecting the nation's waters and adds costs with few benefits. "While we appreciate the agencies' recent efforts, the flawed consultation process has resulted in a final rule that does not move us closer to achieving clean water goals and creates more confusion than clarity. Counties support common-sense environmental protection, but the final rule expands federal oversight and will create costly delays in critical work without any proven environmental benefit." NACo is undertaking an extensive analysis of the rule's impact on counties.

Following are initial highlights.

There are eight categories of waters that fall under federal jurisdiction — traditional navigable waters, interstate waters, territorial seas, impoundments (i.e. dams), tributaries, adjacent waters and specific regional features/100-year floodplain/4,000 feet from WOTUS with a significant nexus.

- The first four categories are essentially unchanged from current rule — traditional navigable, interstate, territorial seas and impoundments.
- Ditches and channels are classified as tributaries. However, the final rule contains exemptions for certain types of ditches. NACo is assessing whether the language is helpful for counties.
- Prairie potholes, Carolina bays and Delmarva bays, pocosins, western vernal pools and Texas coastal prairie wetlands may be jurisdictional.
- All waters located within a 100-year floodplain and all waters within 4,000 feet of the high-tide line or ordinary high water mark may trigger the significant nexus determination and be subject to WOTUS regulation.
- Storm water systems and wastewater recycling structures are exempt if they are built on "dry land." However, it's less certain whether storm water systems that have a portion of the system built in floodplains or adjacent to a WOTUS, are exempt.

Reprinted from NACo County News Alert, June 1 issue.

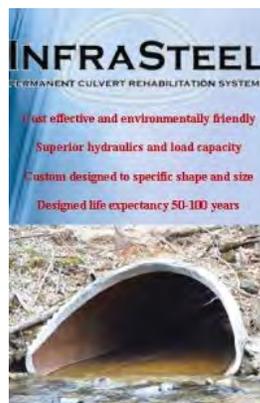
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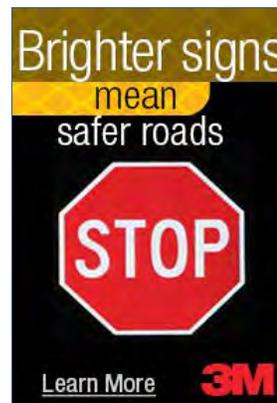
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June 2015

Fayette County, Iowa, Seeks County Engineer



The position requires registration as a Professional Engineer in the State of Iowa.

Registration as a Land Surveyor in the State of Iowa is preferred.

Salary commensurate with qualifications and experience.

[View the Job Description and Application.](#)

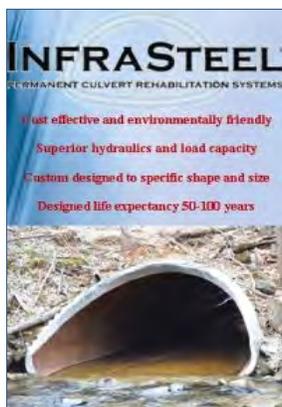
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West Union, IA

Please submit application and resume to the Fayette County Board of Supervisors by July 15.

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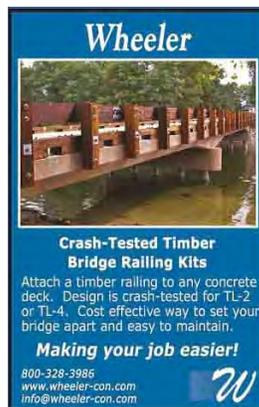
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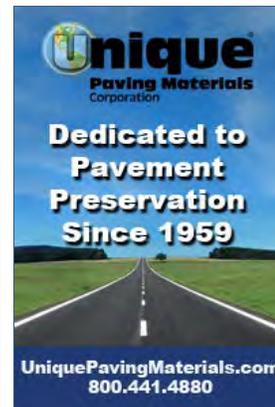
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June 2015

County Engineer Opening in Dubuque County, Iowa



This position is responsible for the overall operation and management of the secondary roads department, which includes an \$11M budget and the direction of 41 employees.

Salary Range is \$97,000 to \$150,000 commensurate with experience, plus excellent benefit package.

Must be licensed as a Professional Civil Engineer in the state of Iowa. Valid Iowa Driver's License is required.

Qualified candidates must possess knowledge and experience in the area of administrative work overseeing road and bridge construction and maintenance, storm drainage, snow and ice control, equipment maintenance and engineering operation.

Registration as a Land Surveyor is preferred.

Applications must be received from and returned to:

Iowa Works Regional 1
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Email mail susan.peil@iwd.iowa.gov and put "Application for Dubuque County Engineer" in the subject line.

Application deadline is July 17 at 3:00 pm. Equal Opportunity / Affirmative Action Employer.

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Register for the National ABC Conference

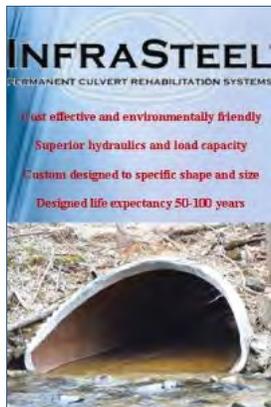
The 2015 National Accelerated Bridge Construction Conference will be held Dec 6-8 in Miami, Florida. Please visit the [website](#) to find more information.

The 2015 Conference promises to be even bigger and better. In 2014 more than 750 attended the conference, including more than 150 state bridge engineers, more than 40 FHWA bridge engineers, and many consultants and bridge officials. FHWA Acting Administrator Gregory Nadeau was the keynote speaker. More than 160 technical presentations were made and 9 workshops were held.

The conference will recognize the best ABC projects in several categories as well as the ABC person of the year, an individual who has contributed most to the cause of ABC. The deadline to submit your nominations is September 15.

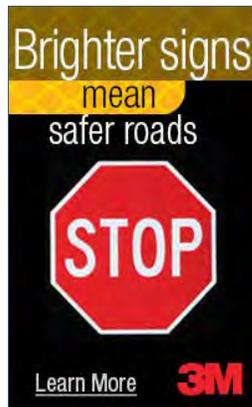
If you need additional information, please contact Conference Chair Dr. Azizinamini at aazizina@fiu.edu.

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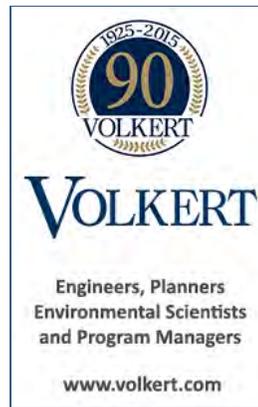
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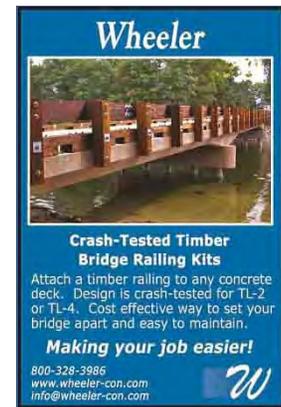


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