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August 2015

President's Report

By Duane Ratermann, PE
Knox County, Illinois



Contact Your House Member on the Transportation Bill

The time to act is now. In recent weeks the staff members for the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee have been working on the language for a new highway bill. Just prior to the August recess for Congress, the Senate passed the Developing a Reliable and Innovative Vision for the Economy (DRIVE) Act.

The T&I staff members are using the DRIVE Act as a foundation for their multi-year highway and public transportation bill. I encourage everyone to reach out to your Congressional members.

View a [Sample Letter](#) to send to your Representative.

NACE sent this letter to all Members of the committee. Our top priorities are [Project Streamlining](#), [Toward Zero Deaths](#), and [Strategic Highway Safety Plans](#) for inclusion in the reauthorization of MAP-21.

It is up to us to deliver our message that Local Roads Matter. Nationwide, local governments own 78% of the road miles and 67% of the structurally deficient bridges. With MAP-21 came a 30% decrease in funding available for county owned highways and bridges.

The NACE Legislative Committee and NACE staff have been working very closely with Jessica Monahan, NACo Associate Legislative Director, in developing a strategy. NACo has developed an [August Advocacy Toolkit](#) that provides helpful tips for communicating with Congress and the media.

Alabama Affiliate Has Successful Conference

I recently attended the 87th Annual Convention of the Association of County Commissions of Alabama (ACCA). The convention was held August 18-20 at the Perdido Beach Resort in Orange Beach. It was my first trip to the Gulf Coast since the NACE Annual Conference was held in Biloxi, Miss., in 2003. This was the second conference I have attended this summer where members of NACE met jointly with their County Commissioners or what we in Illinois call County Board Members.

A Special Thanks goes to Richie Beyer, NACE Past President, for coordinating my visit; Chris Champion, Alabama NACE Director, for getting me to and from the airport; Dennis McCall, Southeast Region Vice President, for loaning me his golf clubs and making sure I enjoyed a pontoon boat ride on Perdido Bay; and the entire membership of the ACEA for welcoming me and showing me some real southern hospitality.

For the Monday golf tournament, rain showers in the morning gave way to sunny skies with humidity levels pretty typical for August in southern Alabama. Apparently Sonny Brasfield, the ACCA Executive Director, does have the ability to control the weather. Tuesday morning the Association of County Engineers of Alabama (ACEA) held a Board of Directors meeting, which I sat in on.

I addressed the ACEA membership and updated them on NACE and our current activities. Sallie Clark, NACo President also addressed the County Engineers on her presidential initiative, Safe and Secure Counties. I offered NACE's support and assistance to her in the coming year.

I hope you all have a safe Labor Day weekend!

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Travel Scholarships Available to County Engineers

Several Travel Scholarships are available, specifically designated for County Engineers, to assist them in attending the **2015 National Accelerated Bridge Construction Conference**. The conference will be held on December 7-8 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in downtown Miami, Florida.

If you are interested in receiving a Travel Scholarship, please email Dr. Atorod Azizinamini at aazizina@fiu.edu and mention that you were contacted by Brian Roberts. The conference will include more than 110 30-minute technical presentations. Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart will be the keynote speaker. 10 pre-conference workshops will be held on Dec. 6.

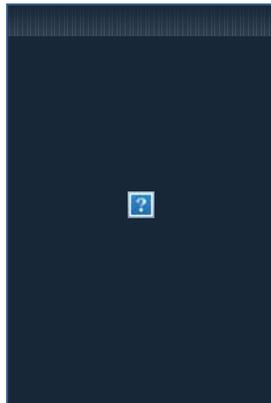
Opportunities are also available to submit your ABC project for a national award. The nomination deadline is September 15. Carmen Swanwick, Utah State Bridge engineer will chair the award committee.

You can find more detailed information [HERE](#) about the conference, including the program and procedure for nominating your project for an ABC award.

The 2014 National Accelerated Bridge Construction Conference held Dec 4-5 was a great success! 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 20-minute technical presentations were made and 9 workshops were. View a [short video](#) capturing the highlights of 2014 conference.

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NACE Call to Action

Contact Your Representative on the Transportation Bill

While Congress is still in recess, the House staff continues working on their transportation bill. This is a critical time for us to have an impact on the final outcome. There appears to be interest in our legislative priorities, but they need to hear from you.

NACE is targeting the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee and a majority of them are in active NACE counties and affiliates.

In the MAP-21 reauthorization, NACE is advocating ...

- Project delivery streamlining
- Toward Zero Death (TZD)
- Strategic highway safety plans

Please email your Representative on the committee if applicable or your congressperson. Keep NACE posted on your efforts and results (nace@naco.org) as we're sharing this info with Jessica Monahan of NACo to increase the effectiveness of our group efforts.

NACE letter and sample for you is below.

How to Contact Your Representative

Email is the best way (do not mail a letter through the US Postal Service). The email addresses can be found [here](#). Or you can attach a pdf of your letter.

[View Members](#) of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

Dear Representative:

As the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee is drafting the reauthorization of MAP-21 legislation, I am writing to convey the legislative priorities of the National Association of County Engineers (NACE).

NACE is a nonprofit, nonpartisan professional association founded in 1956. We're the voice America depends on for safe, efficient county roads and bridges. Nationwide, local roads account for about 75% of our highways and roads, and over 231,000 bridges are owned by counties. Our nearly 2,000 members are county engineers, public works directors, highway commissioners, road managers and related professionals in the US and Canada. We have 32 State Affiliates.

Our top two priorities are Project Streamlining and Safety initiatives.

Project Delivery Streamlining

Administrative requirements when receiving federal funding for county projects result in higher project costs and longer completion times. Project delivery and streamlining reforms are necessary to remedy these consequences. NACE proposes that for simple projects similar to ones identified in MAP-21 where efficiencies related to environmental reviews were established for projects under \$5 million, single page certifications by the local government sponsor and contractor(s) that the project was designed, bid and constructed to local and federal standards.

Safety Initiatives

Rural roads have a disproportionate number of highway fatalities in the US, at roughly 57%. Two items can help address this.

Strategic Highway Safety Plans: Future transportation bills should require State DOTs to coordinate with local agencies in developing SHSPs. By bringing local stakeholders to the table, we can ensure that the proper resources are allocated to reduce highway fatalities.



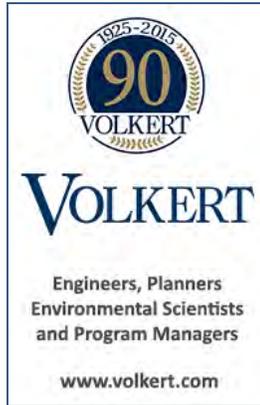
Toward Zero Deaths: NACE supports TZD Grants which would provide local and non-profit organizations with funding to establish and implement TZD programs, which have been proven effective in other organizations. HR 1274 provides the necessary framework to begin this grant program.

I urge you to address these critical issues in your bill to ensure that counties can efficiently and cost effectively build and maintain their vital transportation infrastructure and reduce the fatalities on county roads.

Please contact NACE Executive Director at 202-393-5041 or broberts@naco.org if you have any questions about our priorities. And thank you for your continued attention to these matters.

Sincerely,

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Acrow Bridge's 700XS Series of Prefabricated Modular Steel Bridges

The Perfect Solution for Many Bridging Requirements

By Eugene Sobecki
National Sales Manager, Acrow Bridge

Acrow bridge applications range from long term and permanent solutions to detours, temporary and emergency replacement. The cornerstone of their product offerings, the modular 700XS series, is engineered to support heavy loads, including rail traffic, and constant vehicular traffic year in and year out, which makes them ideal for use on heavy industrial and building construction sites. They are also designed to withstand severe weather conditions, and are virtually maintenance free.

Prefabricated modular steel bridging is a cost-effective solution that ensures a fast and straightforward bridge assembly and installation, requiring minimal equipment to construct the bridge and then roll it into place. Acrow Bridge has experience in designing and engineering bridge solutions to meet even the most complex site constraints.

The use of detour bridges has grown significantly in recent years as more and more contractors use them to stay on or ahead of schedule and control costs, while providing a safe and dependable route for traffic. Acrow bridges used as temporary detours address two major issues during highway and road construction. By providing a temporary roadway that is predictable and unchanging, traffic disruptions are significantly reduced while the safety of motorists and construction workers is greatly enhanced. This is a safer, faster and more economical alternative to "phased" construction in which lanes are moved as needed to divert traffic around work sites.

In cases where emergency replacement of a damaged structure is needed, the 700XS series can be installed within a tight timeframe, creating a quick and safe solution to traffic problems and eliminating the potential for financial impact to affected businesses.

700XS bridges are also an excellent choice as permanent structures and have an anticipated lifespan of 75 to 100 years. Built to last, the bridges can be installed as permanent or long-term temporary structures. Acrow bridges are made in the USA, and meet federal requirements for US content and manufacturing, satisfying the Buy America Act of 1993.

Acrow bridges can be rented or purchased. Many state departments of transportation have purchased and maintain an inventory of Acrow bridging components, which they use for planned detours and emergency response. They can be easily disassembled and reassembled for use wherever needed, enabling projects to be completed faster and at less cost. Contractors also purchase Acrow bridges; they are a cost-effective investment and provide a proven competitive advantage.

Acrow Bridge has a long history of serving the transportation and construction industries. For more than 60 years, they have



built a great track record of successful collaborations with state departments of transportation on the design and installation of a full line of modular steel bridging solutions for vehicle, rail and pedestrian use. For more information, please visit www.acrow.com.

Eugene Sobecki is based in Acrow's Parsippany, NJ headquarters. He can be reached at esobecki@acrowusa.com or by phone at 973/244-0080.

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NACE Congratulates Greg Nadeau, New FHWA Administrator



On August 11, Gregory G. Nadeau was sworn in as the nation's 19th Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration by US Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx. Nadeau had served as Deputy Administrator since 2009, and was nominated by President Barack Obama for the agency's top position on May 11.

"NACE has a great partner in Greg Nadeau, and we look forward to collaborating with him and FHWA on transportation and local road initiatives," said Brian Roberts, PE, Executive Director. "Greg was instrumental in moving the Every Day Counts (EDC) LPA Stakeholder Partnering forward and we're excited about advancing Toward Zero Deaths (TZD), project streamlining, and local highway safety plans. Greg's a longtime transportation leader, and we congratulate him on his well-deserved swearing in as Administrator."

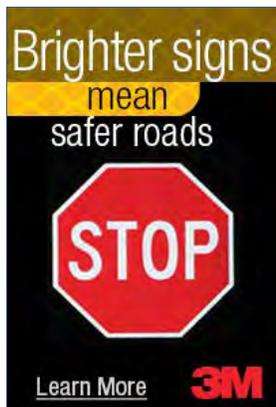
Nadeau has directed the development and administration of the Every Day Counts (EDC) innovation partnership with the states. EDC is designed to reduce project delivery time and accelerate the rapid deployment of innovative technology using a state-based model. Partnering with FHWA teams across the nation on the implementation of EDC are state DOT and local partners, as well as stakeholders in the private and non-profit transportation sectors. EDC strategies and technologies provide state and local governments with innovative solutions that are saving time, saving money, and saving lives.

Leading the FHWA, Nadeau has overseen the agency's work with state DOTs to make use of these innovations nationwide. Nadeau continues to play a critical role in developing regional summits and promoting the development of State Transportation Innovation Councils that bring together representatives throughout the highway transportation community to match new technologies with current and future transportation projects and make them standard practice.

In addition to keeping roadway fatalities on US roads at historic lows, he oversaw the introduction of a data-driven approach to pinpoint states' deadliest intersections and led efforts to develop effective, low-cost measures that have significantly reduced the number of crashes nationwide. Nadeau serves on the USDOT Freight Policy Council. The Council advises US Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx on the development and implementation of MAP-21 freight policy provisions, including the National Freight Policy and the President's National Export Initiative.

Before joining FHWA, Nadeau served as the Maine Department of Transportation's (MaineDOT) Deputy Commissioner for Policy, Planning and Communications from 2003-2009. He also served as Senior Policy Advisor to Governor Angus King from 1995-2001. He represented the city of Lewiston in the Maine House of Representatives from 1978-1990.

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Public Works and Emergency Response

By Julie Bueren

Contra Costa County, Calif.



August 17th was a normal Monday morning until ...

While getting ready for work my house started to rattle and roll a bit. Being a native of the San Francisco Bay area, I knew immediately we were having an earthquake. Once I realized we were safe and no major damage, my mind turned to my role as an emergency services worker and staff of the Contra Costa County's Emergency Operations Center.

To assess the situation, I first went to the USGS website to see where and how big. It was a 4.0 event on the Hayward Fault near Oakland California at 6:49 a.m. The second thing I did was turn on the television to see the news coverage. This is a good quick way to understand the magnitude and if there is any major damage.

By the time I turned the news on, they were reporting that the Bay Area Rapid Transit District had already inspected their rails and tunnels and the system was up and running after a short delay. I also heard that there were not any major issues with roads or bridges. This quick assessment allowed me to breathe a sigh of relief and go about my day as usual.

Though small, this incident is a good reminder that as County Engineers and Public Works professionals, we are a key component of our agencies' emergency response.

Public works employees are first responders in an emergency. In major events, access is frequently an area of focus for public works personnel. The ability to get to and from impacted areas is often difficult due to damaged or impassable structures and roadways. In such cases, restoring access is essential to save lives and preserve property.

The Public Works Department is called upon to bring in heavy equipment and personnel to remove debris and re-establish access for emergency workers who need to rescue or evacuate residents. Our maintenance and operations staff are a visible and vital element in the response and recovery phases. They are among the first to respond and clear roadways so that police, fire, emergency medical and utilities vehicles can access stricken areas. Field forces also assist with traffic control, perimeter security, vehicle service, debris management and restoration of infrastructure.

In order to be effective in responding in an emergency it is critical to prepare, plan and practice. In my County our Office of Emergency Services takes the lead in coordinating response planning for the County. We participate in statewide exercises on an annual basis. Sometimes these are table top exercises, but often they involve full activation of our Emergency Operations Center. These simulations provide a safe environment to test our capabilities in emergency response.

We annually provide training to our employees to ensure they know their role as a disaster services worker. A key component of our employees being ready to respond is for them to have planned and prepared for themselves and their families.

There are many resources and tools available [HERE](#) to assist in developing a plan for you and your family.

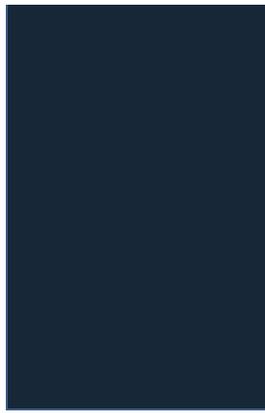
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Chelan County, Wash., Sees Wildfires Strain Resources



A DC-10 air tanker drops retardant in Chelan County, Wash., Aug. 14, as the latest wildfire moves through the county. It's among 78 or so major wildfires burning this summer, mostly in Washington (18), Idaho (15), California (13) and Montana (12). The year is on track to be the most destructive in a decade with more than 7.1 million acres in flames compared to 6.7 million in 2012, according to data from the National Interagency Fire Center.

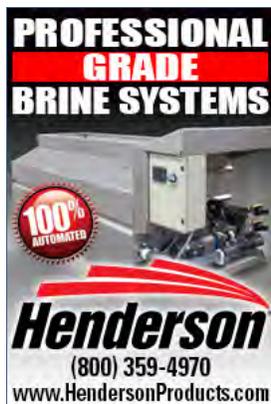
Chelan County Commissioner Ron Walter says the concentration of fires is straining Forest Service resources. "They're stretched real thin with their aerial tankers. The biggest issue is getting crews who are qualified to fly the planes and helicopters," Walter said. Aerial support has been instrumental in containing property damage in his county.

The fire that erupted Aug. 10 in scrub and sagebrush was fanned by 40 mph winds. "Without air support we would have lost a lot more homes and other buildings." As of Aug. 19, 35 homes and 20 outbuildings had been lost. Walter, who chairs NACo's Public Lands Steering Committee, said "The fires bring home the need to get a message to Congress about preventing fire through how we manage our public lands."

He also had another point to make. "I was amazed at the outreach from fellow commissioners as they heard about the fires. We're a good family, that NACo family."

Reprinted from NACo County News, August 25.

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Federal Court Blocks "Waters of the US" Rule

By Nick Goldstein
ARTBA

In an encouraging sign for ARTBA's environmental litigation, a federal district judge in North Dakota issued a preliminary injunction Aug. 27 preventing the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) from implementing a new waterways rule that could lead to regulation of roadside ditches.

However, there is some confusion on how far the injunction reaches. Some analysts claim the injunction is nationwide, while others claim it could be limited to only North Dakota. EPA has said it considers the injunction to impact only those states that were involved in the decision, which are Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Idaho, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming.

Two other federal courts, one in Georgia, the other West Virginia, recently denied similar requests for a preliminary injunction. But all it takes is one injunction for the rule to be temporarily blocked.

ARTBA and 13 other trade associations recently sued EPA over the rule in a federal district court in Texas. At issue is how EPA's attempts to define the types of bodies qualifying as "waters of the United States" and therefore subject to federal authority. For transportation construction, the new rule would require additional burdensome permitting requirements and likely be also used as a litigation tool by project opponents, both of which would result in delays to key transportation improvements and ultimately cost taxpayers more money.

ARTBA considers the North Dakota decision a welcome recognition of how overbroad the EPA rule is.

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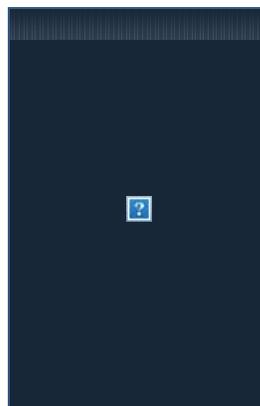


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Best Practices for Using Co-ops

By Robert Barkin
American City & County



As Joseph Procop, procurement manager of the Central Arkansas Transit Authority, began looking for 15 buses to replace some older models, he found a contract in a Louisiana county that he thought promising. By piggybacking onto an existing contract, his agency could pay much less for the buses than if it went out to bid on the relatively small number that it needed.

But when he looked into the details behind the Louisiana contract, he learned that the county could not offer to extend its contract outside of the state. Instead he had to turn to a contract issued by a city in Pennsylvania that could offer him buses at a good price. "We needed to look at all of the legal hurdles," he said of the experience. "We have to make sure that everything is squared away from a

legal standpoint."

Gaining a firm understanding of the legal aspects of a cooperative contract is just one of the many practices that procurement officials follow when deciding whether to take advantage of a cooperative agreement.

Whether piggybacking on another community's contract or buying through one of the many national cooperatives that provide purchasing options for governments throughout the country, government officials are finding more options than ever to speed up their procurement process at good prices with limited staff.

Yet, they also point out that they take considerable care to make sure that the purchase they are pursuing fits the requirements of their employer. "You've got to be careful about a cooperative bid," says Joel Manning, who buys for Charlotte/Mecklenburg County Library system. "You have to look and see who's driving the bid."

Procurement officials take advantage of many new technologies that help them scour the marketplace to find out what is available that meets their needs. Often, they consult with their colleagues on the availability of contracts that might best work for them. Finally, especially on larger-cost items, they talk to vendors about contracts that the vendor has already signed in other governments that might work for them.

Following a Process to Find a Co-op

Carolyn Ninedorf, purchasing agent for Dade County, Wis., says that she follows a process to determine the suitability of a cooperative agreement for her county's purposes. "I look at what's behind the contract," she says. "Does it have a good cost, is the quantity I need available? Is the contract good for us? Can we get good value by using the contract?"

Purchasing officials especially like the additional flexibility that cooperatives provide their operations, since most do not require any commitment to buy. "We use co-ops as a comparison against other opportunities," says John Holmes, a buyer in La Plata County, Colo. "We have the right to buy off the bid, but the fallback is we can withdraw if we find a lower price."

As part of its process, the county spot checks the co-op price against other bidders, including local vendors. "Sometimes the co-op bids are higher," he says. "They might have to be available for a full year, so they have to include an escalation against inflation. If I need something the next Monday, I would get the current market price."

Another factor might be the cost of shipping, if the contract provider is farther away. A local vendor might be able to fulfill the bid at a slightly higher price, but not charge for shipping. In the end, the county might be better off going local.

Buying local also has a secondary positive effect, says Angelo Salomone, purchasing administrator for Coral Springs, Fla. "The local vendor is service oriented; they have boots on the ground," he says. "It's important to have a strong local presence." Increasingly, though, vendors have become responsive to the concept of selling to one entity as part of a broader contract. This can be a win-win for both sides of the contract, procurement officials say, since the vendor gets a bigger sale for the same effort and the buyer can take advantage of the economies of larger purchases.

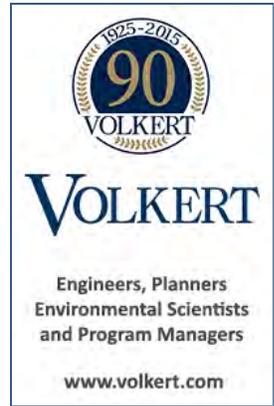
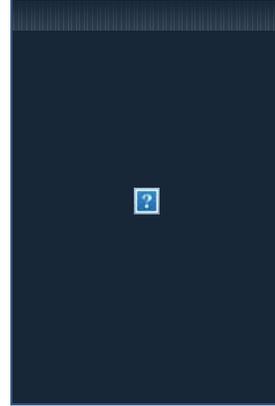
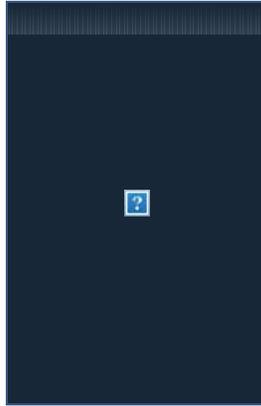
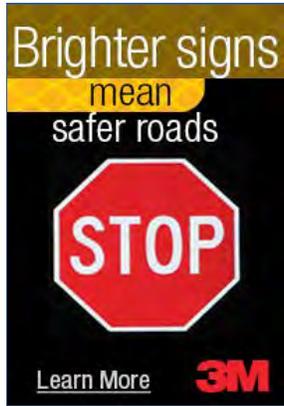
"We depend on vendor communication to some extent," says Dan Marron, contracts and risk manager for Sparks, Nev. "They

hear what's best out there, which contracts we might be able to piggyback onto. Everyone has a co-op contract. It's the first thing the buyer asks."

With so much opportunity, governments are finding that cooperative buying has become a good channel for meeting their purchasing needs and that experience has brought increasing confidence in the best practices to ensure that the government entity is getting the right product or service for the right price. "The industry has evolved." Marran says. "There's an alphabet soup of co-ops. The largest co-ops, we know they do good work. We're not as concerned with the process."

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August 2015

Traffic Deaths Up Sharply in First 6 Months

By Joan Lowy

Associated Press



Traffic deaths were up 14% nationally in the first six months of this year and injuries were up by a third, according to data gathered by the National Safety Council.

An improved economy and low gas prices have encouraged Americans to put a record number of miles on the road, said Deborah Hersman, president of the council. But, she said, that's not the whole explanation for the increase in deaths and injuries.

All told, nearly 19,000 people across the country lost their lives in traffic accidents through June, and the tally doesn't include two of the historically highest months for traffic deaths,

July and August, said the council, a nonprofit organization created by Congress to promote safety.

If the trend continues, traffic deaths this year could exceed 40,000 for the first time since 2007, when there were nearly 44,000 deaths, Hersman said in an interview. The increases began in the last quarter of 2014 and have been recorded consistently through each month of this year, Hersman said. "As a safety professional, it's not just disappointing but heartbreaking to see the numbers trending in the wrong direction," she said.

The nation's driving steadily increased for 15 consecutive months through May, the Transportation Department said in July. Americans drove 1.26 trillion miles in the first five months of 2015, passing the previous record, 1.23 trillion, set in May 2007.

However, the cumulative increase in vehicle mileage this year through May is 3.4 percent, far less than the 14% increase in deaths, Hersman noted. Also, the estimated annual mileage death rate so far this year is 1.3 deaths per 100 million vehicle miles traveled, up from the preliminary 2014 rate of 1.2 deaths.

Other safety trends are at play as well. In recent decades, deaths due to crashes involving drunken driving have dropped from about 50 percent of fatalities to about 30 percent, she said. Teen driving deaths are also down, and seatbelt use is up. And cars have more safety technology than ever, although drivers sometimes don't use it or don't know how to use it, Hersman said.

On the other hand, a growing number of states are raising speed limits, and everywhere drivers are distracted by cellphone calls and text messages. The council estimated in a report this spring that a quarter of all crashes involve cellphone use. Besides fatal crashes, that includes injury-only and property damage-only crashes.

"For many years people have said, 'If distraction is such a big issue, why don't we see an increase in fatal crash numbers?' Well, we're seeing increasing fatal crashes numbers, but I think it's complicated to tease out what that is due to," Hersman said.

Jonathan Adkins, executive director of Governors Highway Safety Association, which represents state highway safety offices, confirmed that states have taken note of the trend as well. Given the stronger economy, lower unemployment and low gas prices, "we have expected an uptick in travel and, sadly, deaths," he said.

"The increase is definitely troubling," Adkins said. "But after such historic declines in recent years, it's not unexpected to see an upswing."

Released by Associated Press on August 17.

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August 2015

Teenage FOMO to Blame for Dangerous Texting while Driving

By Candace Amos
New York Daily News



Teenage 'FOMO,' or fear of missing out, is the culprit behind so many fatal accidents a recent study conducted by Liberty Mutual Insurance and SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) shows.

A missed text message or unchecked notification can be the defining factor behind a thriving social life - and a large quantity of teens are making sure not to skip a beat, even while driving in fast-moving traffic.

Nearly half of the 2014 study's teen participants (48 percent) said they text more when they are alone in the car, but claimed the reason was to update their parents. Of the teens who believed their parents expected a quick reply, 1 in 5 said they like to send an update in one minute, and a quarter of the group said they think they should respond within five minutes.

With nearly 300 deadly crashes caused by distracted teen drivers in 2013, and the onslaught of social media apps created almost daily, this scary statistic is likely to grow. "Teens may be at higher risk because they don't always have the attentional capacity to deal with all the complexities on the road," said Dr. William Horrey, PhD, principal research scientist at the Liberty Mutual Research Institute for Safety.

According to the report, 38% of teens admitted to using Snapchat while driving; 20% use Instagram; and 17% of teens check their Twitter timelines behind the wheel. Facebook and YouTube accounted for 12% of teens who check apps while driving.

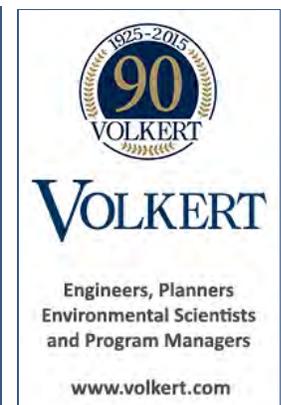
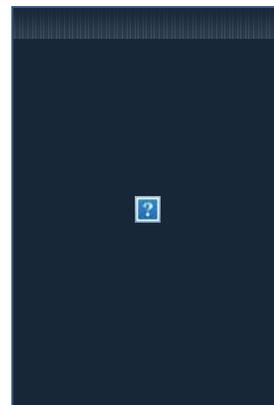
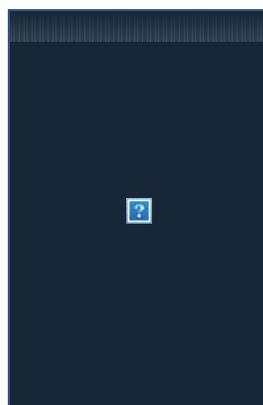
"These distractions in addition to fatigue may be even more significant with teens due to their relative driving inexperience as well," Horrey said. The organization, which was formed in the '90s to bring awareness to drunk driving, laid some of the responsibility on parents.

"It's so important for parents and teens to recognize and talk about these dangerous distractions to ensure better safety behind the wheel," Horrey said. SADD suggests both parties come to an agreement on safe driving with a "Parent-Teen Driving Contract."

"The Contract is both a conversation-starter about safety issues and a customized agreement that provides both parents and teens an easy roadmap to uphold family driving rules empowering open communication helping to lead to safe behavior the wheel," the organization noted.

Reprinted from New York Daily News, August 6.

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August 2015

States Raising Taxes, Fees and Debt to Pay for Road Repairs

By David Lieb

Associated Press



While Congress remains stalled on a long-term plan for funding highways, state lawmakers and governors aren't waiting around. Nearly one-third of the states have approved measures this year that could collectively raise billions of dollars through higher fuel taxes, vehicle fees and bonds to repair old bridges and roads and relieve traffic congestion, according to an analysis by The Associated Press.

The surge of activity means at least half of the states - from coast to coast, in both Republican and Democratic areas - now have passed transportation funding measures since 2013. And the movement may not be done yet.

Tennessee's governor is in the midst of a 15-city tour highlighting the state's transportation needs. North Carolina lawmakers are debating a road-bonding proposal. And legislators are returning to work this week in California and Michigan with transportation funding on the agenda.

"I don't know of a state that's not having the conversation" about raising revenue for transportation, said Iowa Transportation Director Paul Trombino III, who is vice president of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials and whose home state recently raised fuel taxes by 10 cents a gallon.

The widespread focus on transportation funding comes as state officials are becoming frustrated by federal inaction in helping to repair roads and bridges described as crumbling, aging and unsafe. About 20 percent of the nation's 900,000 miles of interstates and major roads need resurfacing or reconstruction, according to one analysis of federal data. A quarter of the 600,000 bridges are considered structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. That doesn't necessarily mean they are about to fall; it means they are showing worrisome problems or are no longer adequate for today's traffic.

"There's a lot of voices that say let's push this off," said Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam, whose call for more transportation funding has been opposed by some fellow Republicans. "But the need is not going to go away. We're going to have to do something to address this." In many states, the new money is going primarily toward repairing old infrastructure, though some projects - such as a new four-lane U.S. 20 across Iowa - are designed to ease congestion so that commerce can flow more freely.

Congress has yet to agree on long-term funding to supplement the states' efforts. Instead, it recently passed its 34th short-term extension of the nation's transportation program since 2009, ensuring only that states will continue to receive federal highway funding through Oct. 29.

Federal dollars, on average, cover about half of a state's capital expenditures for roads and bridges, according to the American Road & Transportation Builders Association. But the money available from the Federal Highway Trust Fund declined 3.5 percent during the five-year period ending in 2013, the latest year for which numbers are available, because of improved fuel economy and other factors. The fund receives money from federal taxes on gasoline and diesel.

Regardless of what Congress ultimately does, some state officials say more taxpayer money will be required to update their aging infrastructure for the modern economy. The newly passed measures put only a dent in a backlog of projects.

In Connecticut, for example, legislators recently approved \$2.8 billion of additional transportation bonding over the next five years. But that's just the start of what Democratic Gov. Dannel Malloy hopes will be a 30-year, \$100 billion overhaul of the state's transportation system.

Idaho Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter, a Republican, signed a law this spring raising the fuel tax by 7 cents a gallon and increasing vehicle registration fees. That's projected to raise \$95 million a year, barely a third of the \$262 million annual shortfall in the transportation system.

Legislators in Kentucky and North Carolina - where tax rates are linked to the price of fuel - passed measures to avert large cuts caused by falling fuel prices. But those bills didn't generate any additional money.

Though politicians often talk about coming up with creative ways of funding roads, many states have resorted to the

traditional means of taxing and borrowing. That's caused consternation for some Republicans who have campaigned against such things. But it helps that 2015 isn't an election year.

Nebraska's single-house legislature, which is dominated by Republicans, overrode Republican Gov. Pete Ricketts' veto to enact a 6-cent-a-gallon fuel tax increase. "I had to do a great deal of soul-searching" on a fuel tax increase, said sponsor Sen. Jim Smith, a conservative Republican. But he added: "The magnitude of the (transportation) backlog was so large that we would not be able to tackle that with gains and efficiencies alone."

Transportation economist George Hoffer of the University of Richmond in Virginia said many politicians find it more palatable to raise the fuel tax than other taxes because "it's considered equitable - the more you use, the more you pay." Also, because fuel prices regularly fluctuate, it's sometimes harder for motorists to notice the added tax. "If it's infrastructure-related, that's a legitimate reason to raise it," said motorist Lauren Sharkey of Spokane, Washington, where the state gasoline tax increased by 7 cents on Aug. 1 as part of a new 16-year, \$16 billion transportation plan.

In states that haven't raised road taxes, some local governments are forging ahead on their own. A new 4-cent-a-gallon gas tax took effect in July in Normal, Illinois. A 5-cent hike is to kick in Jan. 1 in Osceola County, Florida, just south of Orlando. Some transportation tax plans have been rejected by voters. Missouri and Michigan, where measures were defeated, are now pondering alternatives.

Frustrated that others have acted while his home state has not, Missouri transportation commission chairman Stephen Miller has been distributing newsletters warning that his agency has "a huge problem" and "no ready solution." Within a decade, he says, 75 percent of Missouri's secondary roads could be in poor condition.

"At both the federal level and the state level, everyone says transportation is incredibly important, we have a need, we are underfunded, and then nobody can agree on how to do that," Miller said.

Associated Press writers Erik Schelzig in Nashville, Tennessee; Nicholas K. Geranios in Spokane, Washington; Susan Haigh in Hartford, Connecticut; and Kimberlee Kruesi in Boise, Idaho, contributed to this report.

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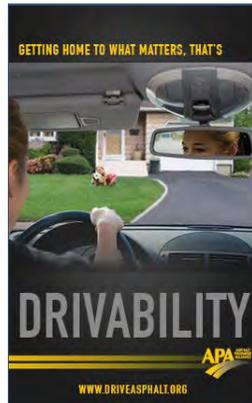
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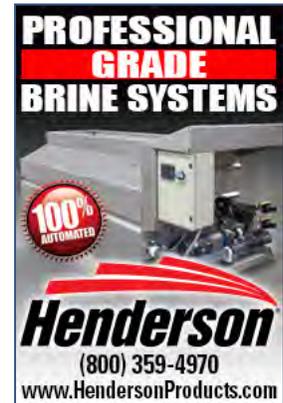


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August 2015

Driverless Truck Meant to Improve Safety in Work Zones

By Michael Rubinkam
The Associated Press



Roving construction crews – the kind you see blacktopping a road, painting lines, inspecting a bridge or installing a traffic signal – are often protected from oncoming traffic by a specialized truck outfitted with a crash barrier.

The crash trucks, fitted with a device called a truck-mounted attenuator, have been credited with saving lives. But the workers who drive them are inevitably placed in harm's way, "literally waiting to be struck," said Robert Roy, president of Royal Truck & Equipment Inc. in Coopersburg.

Royal demonstrated its new driverless crash truck that it hopes will some day improve safety at work zones around the country. Two of the autonomous vehicles will make their debut at highway construction sites in Florida by the end of the year under a state Department of Transportation demonstration program.

"Any time a driver can be removed from these vehicles in a very dangerous situation, and if the vehicle's struck, there's nobody inside of it to receive the damage or the injuries, that's measuring success," Roy said.

Truck-mounted attenuators have been around for 30 years. One study, published this year in the Journal of the Transportation Research Board, found they cut work-zone injuries and fatalities from rear-end crashes nearly in half.

There is considerable interest in autonomous truck-mounted attenuators, both for their potential to reduce risk and as a way to save on labor costs, one of the study's authors, Gerald Ullman of Texas A&M's Transportation Institute, said.

"Connected and autonomous vehicles in general are viewed as the future of surface transportation, and this technology may be one of the first ways in which it gets commercialized," he said. Google and traditional car companies have been developing self-driving vehicles, while Daimler Trucks North America LLC recently demonstrated the first self-driving tractor-trailer to be licensed on public roads. Daimler said it would be years before a self-driving truck hits the market.

In the demonstration, a lead truck beamed information to Royal's attenuator truck. The crash truck followed the lead truck around the parking lot of Bethlehem's municipal swimming pool, perfectly mimicking its movements, speed and braking.

Royal, the nation's largest manufacturer of truck-mounted attenuators, is partnering on the driverless crash trucks with Micro Systems Inc. of Fort Walton Beach, Florida, which supplies unmanned vehicles to the military and developed the technology.

Royal said the terms of the agreement with Florida's transportation department are still being negotiated.

Released by the Associated Press on August 24.

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