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**For Immediate Release**

**January 6, 2015**

**Report available at: [tripnet.org](http://tripnet.org)**

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**DEFICIENT ROADWAYS COST ARKANSAS MOTORISTS APPROXIMATELY \$2 BILLION ANNUALLY. COSTS WILL RISE AND TRANSPORTATION WOES WILL WORSEN WITHOUT FUNDING BOOST**

*Eds.: The report includes regional pavement condition, congestion and highway safety data, and cost breakdowns statewide and for the Little Rock area.*

**Little Rock, AR** – Roads and bridges that are deficient, congested or lack desirable safety features cost Arkansas motorists a total of \$2 billion statewide annually due to higher vehicle operating costs, traffic crashes and congestion-related delays. Increased investment in transportation improvements at the local, state and federal levels could relieve traffic congestion, improve road and bridge conditions, boost safety, and support long-term economic growth in Arkansas, according to a new report released today by [TRIP](#), a Washington, DC based national transportation organization.

The TRIP report, “[Arkansas Transportation by the Numbers: Meeting the State’s Need for Safe and Efficient Mobility](#),” finds that, throughout Arkansas, nearly a third of major locally and state-maintained urban roads and highways and nearly a quarter of major rural roads and highways are in poor condition. Nearly a quarter of Arkansas’ bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. The state’s major urban roads are becoming increasingly congested, with drivers wasting significant amounts of time and fuel each year. And, Arkansas’ traffic fatality rate is the fifth highest nationally and the state’s rural non-interstate traffic fatality rate is more than three times the fatality rate on all other roads in the state.

Driving on deficient roads costs the state’s motorists approximately \$2 billion per year in the form of extra vehicle operating costs (VOC) as a result of driving on roads in need of repair, lost time and fuel due to congestion-related delays, and the cost of traffic crashes in which roadway features likely were a contributing factor. A breakdown of the costs statewide and per motorist in Little Rock area is below.

Location	VOC	Safety	Congestion	TOTAL
Little Rock	\$902	\$227	\$545	\$1,674
<b>Statewide Total</b>	<b>\$1.1 Billion</b>	<b>\$698 Million</b>	<b>\$250 Million</b>	<b>\$2 Billion</b>

The TRIP report finds that 32 percent of major locally and state-maintained urban roads in Arkansas are rated in poor condition and 42 percent are rated in mediocre condition or fair condition and the remaining 26 percent are rated good. The report finds that 23 percent of major locally and state-maintained rural roads in Arkansas are rated in poor condition, 46 percent are rated in mediocre condition or fair condition and the remaining 31percent are rated good.

A total of 23 percent of Arkansas’ bridges show significant deterioration or do not meet modern design standards. Seven percent of Arkansas’ bridges are structurally deficient, with significant deterioration to the bridge deck, supports or other major components. An additional 16 percent of the state’s bridges are functionally obsolete,

which means they no longer meet modern design standards, often because of narrow lanes, inadequate clearances or poor alignment.

“Safe and well-maintained highways are critical to Arkansas’ economic development,” said Commissioner Robert Moore, of the Arkansas Highway Commission. “Poor roads and highways cost Arkansans money and, in some cases, lives. While, on the other hand, adequate funding to improve Arkansas highways creates private-sector jobs, improves our business climate, attracts new business and industry, and keep motorists safe.”

Traffic crashes in Arkansas claimed the lives of 2,849 people between 2008 and 2012. Arkansas’ overall traffic fatality rate of 1.65 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel in 2012 is the fifth highest in the nation and significantly higher than the national traffic fatality rate of 1.13. Arkansas’ non-Interstate rural roads have a fatality rate in 2012 of 2.71 traffic fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel, more than three times the fatality rate of 0.87 on all other roads and highways in the state.

The efficiency of Arkansas’ transportation system, particularly its highways, is critical to the health of the state’s economy. The [Federal Highway Administration](#) estimates that each dollar spent on road, highway and bridge improvements results in an average benefit of \$5.20 in the form of reduced vehicle maintenance costs, reduced delays, reduced fuel consumption, improved safety, reduced road and bridge maintenance costs and reduced emissions as a result of improved traffic flow.

The Federal surface transportation program is a critical source of funding in Arkansas. From 2008 to 2012, the federal government provided \$1.42 for road improvements in Arkansas for every dollar the state paid in federal motor fees. In July, Congress approved an eight-month extension of the federal surface transportation program, which will now run through May 31, 2015. The legislation will also transfer nearly \$11 billion into the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) to preserve existing levels of highway and public transportation investment through the end of May 2015.

“These conditions are only going to worsen if greater funding is not made available at the state and federal levels,” said Will Wilkins, TRIP’s executive director. “Congress can help by approving a long-term federal surface transportation program that provides adequate funding levels, based on a reliable funding source. If not, Arkansas is going to see its future federal funding threatened, resulting in fewer road and bridge repair projects, loss of jobs and a burden on the state’s economy.”