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

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**NEBRASKA FACES \$1.1 BILLION TRANSPORTATION FUNDING SHORTFALL  
OVER FIVE YEARS; ROAD AND BRIDGE CONDITIONS FACE INCREASING  
DETERIORATION WITHOUT ADDITIONAL FUNDING**

**DEFICIENT ROADS COST EACH OMAHA DRIVER MORE THAN \$1,100 PER YEAR**

*EDS: THE REPORT INCLUDES A [LIST OF NEEDED ROAD AND BRIDGE PROJECTS THAT ARE CURRENTLY UNFUNDED.](#)*

**Lincoln, Nebraska** – A new report finds that Nebraska faces a \$1.1 billion transportation funding shortfall over the next five years. This is at a time when nearly a quarter of the state’s major roads are in need of repair, more than a quarter of bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete, congestion is increasing and the rural traffic fatality rate is more than four times higher than on all other roads in the state. The report, released today by TRIP, a Washington, DC based national transportation organization, finds that roadways that lack some desirable safety features, have inadequate capacity to meet travel demands or have poor pavement conditions cost the state’s motorists more than \$1 billion annually and the average Omaha area motorist pays \$1,113 each year.

The report, “[Future Mobility in Nebraska: Meeting the State’s Needs for Safe and Efficient Mobility,](#)” finds that the state’s lack of sufficient transportation funding will lead to deteriorated road and bridge conditions, increased urban congestion, a lack of desirable safety features and lost opportunities for economic growth. Data provided by the Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR) shows that under current funding conditions, by 2020, the number of state-maintained miles of roadway (not including Interstates) in very good condition will be cut in half, and the number of miles in poor or very poor condition will increase more than three and a half times. NDOR also projects that the lack of transportation funding will lead to a 43 percent increase in the number of structurally deficient state-maintained bridges between 2010 and 2020.

The TRIP report finds that seven percent of Nebraska’s major roads are rated in poor condition and an additional 16 percent are in mediocre condition. Nineteen percent of the state’s bridges are structurally deficient and seven percent are functionally obsolete. These bridges are inspected regularly and are safe for travel, but many are in need of rehabilitation.

In addition to deteriorating road and bridge conditions, the state’s roads are also becoming increasingly crowded, as commuting and commerce are constrained by growing traffic congestion on

Nebraska's major urban roads. In 2008, 30 percent of the state's urban highways were congested during peak travel times. The TRIP report also finds that Nebraska's rural, non-Interstate roads have a traffic fatality rate that is more than four times higher than that on all other roads in the state. Increased investment in the state's transportation infrastructure could improve road and bridge conditions, ease congestion, enhance safety and support long-term economic growth. The TRIP report contains a [list of needed transportation projects](#) throughout the state that would repair and replace deficient bridges and increase roadway capacity. However, these projects won't move forward without additional transportation funding.

“There are very limited funds available for needed capacity or safety improvements, and there are virtually no funds for transportation system expansion to help spur the economic growth that is the real key to any economic turnaround. Nebraska is essentially in a maintenance only program, and it is trending down with reduced funding levels and construction inflation,” said Matthew Tondl, national director of ACEC Nebraska (American Association of Engineering Companies).

TRIP estimates that Nebraska's roadways that lack some desirable safety features, have inadequate capacity to meet travel demands or have poor pavement conditions cost the state's drivers approximately \$1 billion annually in the form of traffic crashes, additional vehicle operating costs and congestion-related delays. TRIP calculates that in the Omaha metro area this cost is \$1,113 per motorist each year. A breakdown of these costs can be found in the TRIP report.

The federal surface transportation program remains a critical source of funding for road and bridge repairs and transit improvements in Nebraska. The current program, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), originally scheduled to expire on September 30, 2009, now expires on March 4, 2011 following six short-term extensions. The level of funding and the provisions of a future federal surface transportation program will have a significant impact on future highway and bridge conditions and safety as well as the level of transit service in Nebraska.

“Unless Nebraska can find a way to close the transportation funding shortfall, many critically needed projects will remain stranded on the drawing board,” said Will Wilkins, executive director of TRIP. “It is critical that Nebraska adequately fund its transportation system and that Congress produces a timely and adequately funded federal surface transportation program. Thousands of jobs and the state's economy are riding on it.”