

A PUBLICATION OF THE FOUNDATION FOR PAVEMENT PRESERVATION

Jim
Sorenson
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pavement preservation *journal*

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UNDERSTANDING POLYMER MODIFIED ASPHALT EMULSIONS

First International
Pavement Preservation
Conference



By Bill O'Leary
President
Foundation
for Pavement
Preservation



Preservation the Cure for Rough Roads

WE know that pavement preservation practices conserve scarce pavement maintenance dollars both now and in the future. But earlier this year we learned more detail about the actual costs of driving on roads needing maintenance, and the details don't refer to how much money an agency might save; instead they look at costs incurred by road users themselves.

Driving on rough roads costs the average American motorist approximately \$400 a year in extra vehicle operating costs, reported the American Association of State Highway & Transportation Officials (AASHTO), and The Road Information Program (TRIP), an industry nonprofit organization that promotes transportation policies that relieve traffic congestion, improve road and bridge conditions, improve air quality, make highway travel safer and enhance economic productivity.

The situation is worse in big cities. The report found that drivers living in urban areas with populations over 250,000 are paying upwards of \$750 more annually because of accelerated vehicle deterioration, increased maintenance, additional fuel consumption and tire wear caused by poor road conditions.

Rough Roads Ahead: Fix Them Now or Pay for It Later reported that one-third of the nation's major highways, including interstates, freeways and major roads, are in poor or mediocre condition. Roads in urban areas, which carry 66 percent of the traffic, are in much worse shape.

REPORT BOLSTERS PAVEMENT PRESERVATION

"The American people are paying for rough roads multiple times," said Kirk T. Steudle, director of the

Michigan DOT, at a news conference held to release the report. "Rough roads lead to diminished safety, higher vehicle operating costs, and more expensive road repairs. It costs \$1 to keep a road in good shape for every \$7 you would have to spend on reconstruction. It's another drag on the economy."

Long-time members of the pavement preservation community will recognize Steudle's last statement. It's an update of the older pavement preservation mantra — that every \$1 invested in pavement preservation saves up to \$6 in future costs — adjusted for inflation. As such it's a powerful endorsement for pavement preservation.

The report uses the latest government statistics to show pavement conditions in all 50 states and vehicle operating costs by state and urban areas. The report also finds that:

- 30 to 60 percent of the roads in 20 of the nation's largest urban areas are in poor condition.
- 36 percent of the roads in the Detroit urban area are in poor condition. In contrast, the Los Angeles area and surrounding communities have 64 percent of their roads in poor condition.
- 61 percent of rural roads are in good condition.
- 72 percent of the Interstate Highway System is in good condition, but age, weather conditions and burgeoning traffic are eroding ride quality.

None of this should be news to our profession. What is new and exciting is that via the good work of AASHTO and TRIP, information supporting pavement preservation now is appearing — to good reception — in the national and local media. It can't help but encourage pavement preservation in the months and years to come. 

BULLETIN: At press time, Jim Sorenson, senior construction and system preservation engineer, Office of Asset Management, Federal Highway Administration — and a great champion of pavement preservation at the national level — died suddenly Saturday, June 27, aged 59.

The pavement preservation industry had no greater friend and it is with deep sadness that we note his passing. Mr. Sorenson was co-author of an article on polymer modified surface treatments in this issue (see pp 8-12). The Winter 2009 issue will carry a tribute to Mr. Sorenson, and we at FP² invite you to send your reminiscences of Jim for inclusion to bill.oleary@martinmlp.com.

