



TRIP: Arkansas roads deteriorating, need money

Commuting and commerce are constrained by growing traffic congestion in urban areas

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More than a third of Arkansas' major roads are deteriorated, 23% of the state's bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete, urban traffic congestion is mounting, and the traffic fatality rate is among the highest in the nation. This is according to a new report released by TRIP, a Washington, D.C.-based national transportation organization. TRIP's report finds that increased investment in the state's transportation infrastructure could improve road and bridge conditions, enhance safety and support long-term economic growth in the state.

The report, "Future Mobility in Arkansas: Meeting the State's Need for Safe and Efficient Mobility," finds that 9% of major roadways are in poor condition and an additional 25% are in mediocre condition. Roads in need of repair cost each Arkansas motorist an average of \$308 annually in extra vehicle operating costs—\$634 million statewide—including accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional repair costs and increased fuel consumption and tire wear. The TRIP report includes a list of sections of roadway throughout the state that are in need of reconstruction or pavement preservation work, but that cannot be completed because of a lack of transportation funds.

In addition to deteriorated road conditions, 7% of Arkansas' bridges are structurally deficient and an additional 15% are functionally obsolete. TRIP's report identifies several bridge projects that currently lack adequate funding to proceed.

Commuting and commerce are constrained by growing traffic congestion in Arkansas' major urban areas. In 2008, 39% of the state's urban highways were congested during peak travel times. Three of Arkansas' five most significant highway chokepoints are located in the Little Rock area, including the I-430/I-630 interchange and a 5-mile segment of I-30.

Over the past decade, Arkansas has used a combination of federal and state funding to improve its surface transportation network, but many sorely needed transportation projects still remain unfunded. According to the TRIP report, without a significant boost in funding, numerous needed transportation projects will not proceed, including a major reconstruction, pavement preservation projects and roadway widening on 15 state highways, plus repair or replacement of bridges on I-40 at Lake Dardanelle in Pope County, on I-40 over the White River in Prairie county and on I-540 on the Arkansas River in Sebastian and Van Buren counties.

Source: *TRIP*