

## TRIP Gives Nevada Failing Grades

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**Las Vegas**— A high traffic fatality rate and inadequate levels of transportation funding earns Nevada a grade of "F" in both traffic safety and transportation funding, while traffic congestion in the state rates a "D" according to a new report released by

TRIP (The Road Information Program), national non-profit transportation research group. The TRIP report also evaluates and assigns grades to road and bridge conditions in Nevada.

The report, entitled "Making the Grade in Nevada: An Analysis of the Ability of Nevada's Transportation System to Meet the State's Need for Safe and Efficient Mobility," finds that the state faces a \$3.8-billion shortfall in transportation funding through 2015, at a time when the buying power of the 17.65-cents-per-gallon motor fuel tax dedicated to state highway repairs has decreased by 43 percent since it was last raised in 1992. The report also gives a failing grade to traffic safety in Nevada, noting that the state's traffic fatality rate is 42-percent higher than the national average and the seventh highest in the nation. Traffic congestion levels in Nevada earn the state a grade of "D," as vehicle travel in the state increased 103 percent from 1990 to 2005 — the largest increase in the nation — and 44 percent of the state's urban interstates and other highways or freeways are considered congested.

"Without an increase in transportation investment, Nevada will not be able to move forward with numerous projects that would improve road and bridge conditions, enhance safety, relieve congestion and attract economic development," said Tim Cashman, past chairman of the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce.

According to the TRIP report, 10 percent of Nevada's major roads and highways have pavements in poor or mediocre condition. Pavement conditions in the state are expected to worsen because funding for the state's pavement repair program since 2004 has not been adequate to keep pace with deterioration. From 2004 to 2009, Nevada is expected to spend \$506 million on pavement preservation, but needs to spend \$1.27 billion to keep pavements in their current condition — a \$768-million shortfall.

Three percent of Nevada's bridges are rated as structurally deficient and 9 percent are functionally obsolete.

"The TRIP report highlights the benefits of an efficient, well-maintained and adequately funded transportation system," said William Wilkins, executive director of TRIP. "Investments in the state's transportation system improve traffic safety, while enhancing economic vitality and the quality of life in Nevada."

Additional findings of the TRIP report:

- A Blue Ribbon Task Force created by Nevada's State Transportation Board found in December 2006 that the state faces a \$3.8-billion shortfall in funding through 2015 for highway projects needed to accommodate significant traffic growth in the state.
- The Blue Ribbon Task Force report recommended that the state complete the following projects by 2015 in southern Nevada: widening I-15 from Tropicana to the Spaghetti Bowl, widening I-515/US-95 from the Spaghetti Bowl to

Foothill Drive, widening I-15 from the Spaghetti Bowl to Apex, the US-93 Boulder City Bypass, widening US-95 from Craig Road to Kyle Canyon, widening I-15 from St. Rose Parkway to Tropicana Avenue, and improving Las Vegas Beltway interchanges at US-95, I-15 and Summerlin Parkway.

- In northern Nevada, the following projects were recommended for completion by 2015: widening I-80 from Robb Drive to Vista Boulevard, widening US-395 from the Spaghetti Bowl to Stead, and improving Pyramid Highway.
- The buying power of Nevada's 17.65-cents-per-gallon motor fuel tax dedicated to state highway repairs has decreased by 43 percent since it was last increased in 1992. This has reduced Nevada's state motor-fuel tax dedicated to highway repairs to the equivalent of 10.1 cents per gallon in 1992 dollars.
- A total of 1,885 people were killed in Nevada in traffic accidents from 2001 to 2005. Nevada's traffic fatality rate in 2005 was 2.06 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel, 42-percent higher than the national traffic fatality rate in 2005 of 1.45.
- From 1990 to 2005, vehicle travel in Nevada increased at a rate approximately nine times greater than new highway lane capacity was added. Vehicle travel in Nevada increased by 103 percent from 1990 to 2005, and is expected to increase another 125 percent by 2030.