

THE ALABAMA ROADBUILDER



Spring 2009 • A Publication of the Alabama Road Builders' Association



Building Roads the **Green Way**

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

TRIP REPORT SPEAKS VOLUMES

WE JUST HOPE PEOPLE ARE LISTENING

BY S.T. (SONNY) BUNN, JR.
ARBA PRESIDENT



THE ROAD INFORMATION PROGRAM, of which your Alabama Road Builders' Association is a proud supporter, recently released a report on Alabama's road and bridge system. The report determined that:

- Thirteen percent of the state's major roads and highways have pavements in poor or mediocre condition.
- Approximately a quarter of Alabama's bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. This includes all state, local and municipal bridges 20 feet and longer.
- Alabama's population increased 15 percent from 1990 to 2007, from 4 million to 4.6 million residents. Alabama's population is expected to increase by another 15 percent by 2025.
- On average, 1,106 people were killed each year in crashes on Alabama's roads from 2002 to 2006. Alabama's traffic fatality rate in 2006 was 42 percent higher than the national average. Improving safety features on Alabama's roads and highways would likely result in a decrease in traffic fatalities in the state. Roadway design is an important factor in approximately one-third of fatal and serious traffic accidents.

Funding these needs is critical to the future success of the Alabama economy. It has been proven that infrastructure construction projects bring jobs and boost the economy of the state. However, Alabama's method for funding its transportation needs is severely compromised. Not only is our industry working with materials that have increased in price nearly 50 percent in recent years (therefore generating less work with the same amount of money), but inflation has eaten away almost half the purchasing power of the limited dollars that are available. According to the report:

- Alabama faces a transportation funding shortfall of approximately \$6.9 billion from 2008 to 2017. As a result, needed highway projects will not be able to move forward without additional funding. Investment in the state's roads, highways and bridges creates significant employment in the state.

- ALDOT estimates that from 2008 to 2017, approximately \$16.2 billion is needed to allow the state to significantly improve road and bridge conditions, make reasonable roadway safety improvements and address needed traffic congestion relief.
- According to ALDOT estimates, anticipated funding levels from 2008 to 2017 will be only \$9.3 billion. As a result, needed highway improvement and maintenance projects will not be able to move forward without additional transportation funding.
- A 2007 analysis by the Federal Highway Administration found that every \$1 billion invested in highway construction would support approximately 27,800 jobs, including about 9,500 in the construction sector, about 4,300 jobs in industries supporting the construction sector, and about 14,000 other jobs induced in nonconstruction-related sectors of the economy.

We are hopeful that the economic stimulus package from Washington will include infrastructure money, but this will not be the solution to our problems—only a temporary fix. Reauthorization will occur this year as well, and we have to remember that this six-year legislation is the real foundation that holds our road and bridge funding system together.

Alabama hasn't experienced an increase in state support for roads and bridges since 1992 and in federal support since 1993. All the while we are looked at as a pot of money that can be dipped into anytime another state agency needs propping up. As the builders of Alabama's highways, our industry has an obligation to make its roads and bridges as durable and safe as we can, but there must be adequate and sustainable funding to make that possible. Join us, and support your industry to see that this happens. □

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