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**ONE-THIRD OF ALBUQUERQUE'S MAJOR ROADS IN POOR CONDITION,
COSTING EACH DRIVER NEARLY \$600 ANNUALLY**

**URBAN PAVEMENT CONDITIONS LIKELY TO WORSEN AS TRAFFIC VOLUMES
RISE WHILE HIGHWAY REVENUE FALLS SHORT; GREATER INVESTMENT
NEEDED TO ENSURE SMOOTHER RIDES AND LONGER-LASTING ROADS**

Washington, DC- May 8, 2009 – Albuquerque's major urban roadways are among the roughest in the nation, costing area drivers \$576 each year in extra vehicle operating costs. According to a new report released today by TRIP and the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO), 36 percent of major urban roads in Albuquerque are in poor condition, and an additional 27 percent are in mediocre condition.

The TRIP / AASHTO report, entitled "Rough Road Ahead: Fix Them Now or Pay for it Later," evaluated pavement conditions on major urban roadways in the nation's largest urban areas and calculated the extra vehicle operating cost (VOC) to motorists of driving on roads in poor condition. Extra vehicle operating costs include accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional repair costs and increased fuel consumption and tire wear. The report found that the continued increase in urban traffic is putting significant wear and tear on urban roads at a time when transportation funding is inadequate to keep pace with the rate of deterioration on the roads. Vehicle travel in New Mexico increased by 66 percent from 1990 to 2007 and is anticipated to increase by another 60 percent by 2020.

"State and federal funding have already been stretched to their limits to provide a transportation system that can accommodate New Mexico's rapid growth. Local transportation funding must also be an important tool to keep Albuquerque's roads smooth, safe and efficient," said Mike Gibson, executive director of the Associated Contractors of New Mexico.

The report found that the twenty large urban regions (500,000+ population), with the greatest share of major roads and highways with pavements in poor condition are: Los Angeles, 64%; San Jose, 61%; San Francisco-Oakland, 61%; Honolulu, 61%; Concord, CA, 54%; New York – Newark, 54%; San Diego, 53%; New Orleans, 49%; Tulsa, 47%; Palm Springs – Indio,

CA, 47%; Riverside-San Bernardino, 44%; Baltimore, 44%; Sacramento, 44%; Omaha, 41%; Oklahoma City, 41%; San Antonio, 38%; Mission Viejo, CA, 37%; Albuquerque, 36%; Philadelphia, 36%; and Detroit, 36%.

“Our nation has invested \$1.75 trillion in our public highway system over the past 50 years,” said John Horsley, AASHTO Executive Director. “We hope Congress will make it possible for the federal government to sustain its share of the increased investment needed to keep America’s roads in good condition. If not, it will cost the American people billions more later.”

While the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act of 2009 will provide a total of \$27 billion for highway projects (\$253 million in New Mexico), the nation’s highway transportation system will still be in dire need of additional funding for maintenance, preservation, expansion and reconstruction. The current federal transportation program expires on September 30, 2009, requiring Congress to authorize a new federal surface transportation program or extend the current program to allow federal highway dollars to continue to be provided to the states.

“The federal stimulus program is providing a helpful down payment towards repairing some of the nation’s rough roads,” said Frank Moretti, TRIP’s Director of Policy and Research. “But it will take a significant long-term boost in investment by all levels of government to provide Americans with a smooth ride.”