



1726 M Street, NW, #401 • Washington, DC 20036 • P: 202.466.6706 • F: 202.785.4722 • www.tripnet.org • trip@tripnet.org

For immediate release
Thursday, June 29 2006

Contact: Frank Moretti or Carolyn Bonifas
TRIP Office 202-466-6706

Report available at: www.tripnet.org

WYOMING’S INTERSTATE SYSTEM TURNS 50 YEARS OLD, REMAINS CRITICAL LINK IN STATE’S TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM, SAVING EACH WYOMING RESIDENT NEARLY \$2,600 ANNUALLY IN SAFETY BENEFITS, SAVED TIME, REDUCED FUEL AND LOWER CONSUMER COSTS

BENEFITS OF INTERSTATE SYSTEM MAY ERODE IN THE FUTURE UNLESS STATE CAN FUND NEEDED INTERSTATE REPAIRS AND IMPROVEMENTS

Cheyenne, June 29, 2006 – For the last 50 years, Wyoming’s Interstate Highway System has remained the most critical link in the state’s transportation network, saving Wyoming residents \$1.3 billion annually - \$2,571 per person- in safety benefits, saved time, reduced fuel and lower consumer costs. But some of the benefits of Wyoming’s Interstate Highway System may erode unless the state can secure additional funds for needed maintenance and widening projects, according to a new report released today by TRIP, a national nonprofit transportation research group.

The TRIP report, entitled “Saving Lives, Time and Money: A report on the condition, impact, use and future needs of Wyoming’s Interstate Highway System,” estimates that the additional safety features of the Interstate Highway System have saved approximately 1,900 lives in Wyoming since 1956. In addition to saving lives, improved traffic safety provided by the Interstate system saves each Wyoming resident \$475 annually (\$240 million statewide) in reduced healthcare costs and costs associated with lost productivity due to traffic crashes. Wyoming’s Interstate Highway System also saves the average resident \$826 annually (\$418 million statewide) in the value of saved time and fuel, and saves \$1,270 per resident (\$643 million statewide) in reduced consumer costs for apparel, food, housing and transportation.

“Wyoming’s Interstate’s have provided tremendous safety, time and economic benefits over the last 50 years. But without an additional investment in maintaining and expanding the system, the state may see some of those benefits slip away,” said William M. Wilkins, TRIP’s executive director.

According to the TRIP report, between 1990 and 2004, vehicle travel on Wyoming's Interstates increased by 57 percent, while lane miles on the system did not increase at all. Travel on Wyoming's Interstate highways is expected to increase by 60 percent by the year 2026.

"In Wyoming, transportation funding has not kept up with inflation or with the increased demand upon our system. This report highlights the value of a transportation system that at times is taken for granted. We appreciate the recent investments by our Congressional Delegation, our Governor and the Wyoming Legislature. Wyoming needs to further realize the benefits of safe roads on which our families and friends travel," said, Jonathan Downing, Asst. Vice President of the Wyoming Contractors Association.

Overall, Interstate pavement and bridge conditions are acceptable, though some deficiencies exist. Seven percent of Wyoming's Interstate bridges are rated structurally deficient and 13 percent are rated functionally obsolete. Seven percent of Wyoming's Interstate pavements are in poor or mediocre condition. Eleven percent are in fair condition and the remaining 82 percent are rated in good condition.

Because it reduces travel times and provides more direct routes, the Interstate system saves each Wyoming resident 52 hours of travel time annually - 26 million hours statewide. Wyoming's Interstate system annually reduces statewide motor fuel consumption by 12 million gallons.

Wyoming's Interstate highways have saved approximately 1,900 lives in Wyoming since 1956. This estimate is based on assuming that if there were no Interstate highways, traffic would be carried by other major roads in the state, which have higher traffic fatality rates.

Additional findings of the TRIP report:

- Wyoming's Interstate system, which includes six percent of all roadway lane miles in the state, carries 31 percent of all vehicle travel in the state.
- Since funding of the Interstate system was approved in 1956, vehicle miles of travel in Wyoming has increased by 341 percent from approximately 2.1 billion miles driven annually to approximately 9.3 billion miles driven annually.
- The number of vehicles in Wyoming has increased by 254 percent since 1956, and the state's population has jumped by 61 percent during that same time from 314,000 to 507,000.