

# NACE News



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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

*Chris Bauserman, P.E. & P.S., County Engineer, Delaware County, OH*

Over the last 15 years, NACE has enjoyed a strong and productive relationship with the Foundation for Pavement Preservation (FP2). The stated mission of the foundation is to "continuously improve the quality and understanding of pavement preservation technologies through education, research, public-private partnering, and international exchange". FP2 has been the advocate for the pavement preservation industry and thankfully has been very intentional about including NACE as a partner.

County Engineer and former NACE President Duane Blanck from Crow Wing County, MN served on the FP2 Board of Directors up until 2002. Since then, I have had the privilege of serving in that same capacity. This FP2 and NACE partnership has been a fruitful one for our membership. Former foundation executive directors Bill Ballou and Gerry Eller were frequent speakers at our annual conferences and they contributed greatly to our understanding of the proper selection and application of various pavement treatments. Also, the foundation was instrumental in the establishment of the National Center for Pavement Preservation (NCPP) at Michigan State University. The

center is the single most comprehensive resource for education and information on all things related to pavement preservation. If you aren't familiar with the NCPP check out their web site [www.pavementpreservation.org](http://www.pavementpreservation.org).

The foundation understood early on that county engineers and local road professionals are among the best practitioners of pavement preservation. We have been faced with decreasing funds and increasing public expectations for years and we have become very proficient in extending the life of our pavements with innovative and cost effective treatments. The development of structured pavement preservation programs has brought strategy, science and research to work that many of us have intuitively been doing for years.

In mid October, the Foundation for Pavement Preservation held its final meeting. Under the current non-profit status, the foundation has been restricted from lobbying and other means of politically advancing the pavement preservation agenda. The foundation has recently been dissolved and a new 501.c.3 organization has been formed that will be known as FP2.inc. This corporation will act as a trade organization for pavement preservation con-

tractors, material suppliers and equipment manufacturers. FP2.inc will be supported financially by its membership and lobby on their behalf.

While this move will eliminate the board of director seats for public sector representatives like NACE and FHWA, I see this as a positive step. One of the first actions of FP2.inc was to employ a lobbyist to advocate for pavement preservation funding in the next federal transportation bill. That's a cause that I think we can all be supportive of. Also, backing for the National Center for Pavement Preservation will continue and our membership will continue to benefit from this valuable resource.

In a sense, it's sad to see the long and productive relationship between NACE and the Foundation for Pavement Preservation come to an end. But it's very timely for us to acknowledge and be grateful for the important role that the foundation made to our association of county engineers and local road professionals. It's also very clear that individually and collectively we will all continue benefit from the re-focused efforts of the new FP2.inc.



New York State County Highway Superintendents Association celebrates 100 year anniversary. L to R. Tim Hens, NACE State Director, Steve Acquario, Executive Director NYS Association of Counties, Tony Giancola, and Don Higgins, President NYSCHSA.

## SENATE WORKING TO MOVE SIX-MONTH EXTENSION OF HIGHWAY AND TRANSIT PROGRAMS

With only one week remaining in the short-term continuation of authority for federal highway and transit programs, Senate Environment and Public Works Committee leaders are pushing for enactment of a six-month extension that would not require any additional revenue transfers to the Highway Trust Fund.

The EPW Committee is working to "hotline" a six-month extension bill, which would be substituted for the three-month extension (HR 3617) sent over from the House in late September as the authorization was expiring. The House bill was not considered on the Senate floor, and the highway and transit programs were extended under a one-month appropriations continuing resolution. Hotlining is an inquiry to all Senate members to determine if a bill can be enacted by unanimous consent.

The Senate bill would provide \$24.6 billion in contract authority for the highway program. The bill would also apparently restore the \$8.7 billion in contract authority that was rescinded when the 2005 transportation law known as "SAFETEA-LU" expired Sept. 30. Because the bill does not increase obligation authority, it should not require any waiver of budget requirements or

See "Extension" continued page 2.

## U.S. DOT APPROPRIATIONS MEASURE REMAINS STALLED

The House and Senate are expected to vote on a second continuing resolution to temporarily extend funding for many government departments, including the U.S. Department of Transportation, for the fiscal year that started Oct. 1.

Current temporary funding for U.S. DOT and most other federal agencies expires Oct. 31 under the terms of a continuing resolution enacted in late September. Congress has finished only four of the 12 annual appropriations bills. With floor action slow in the Senate, that chamber's chief appropriator is now beginning to discuss the need for an "omnibus" bill soon that would bundle the remaining spending bills into one package.

The next continuing resolution is expected to fund the government until Dec. 15, Congress Daily reported. An omnibus measure would likely then follow to fund agencies until Sept. 30, 2010, the end of the fiscal year.

Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Daniel Inouye, D-HI, said Tuesday he expects an omnibus will be necessary. With the Senate expected to take up a massive healthcare reform package soon, the chamber will not have time to finish separate consideration of all appropriations bills by year's end. Inouye said his goal is to complete an omnibus package by Dec. 1.

The appropriations bill funding U.S. DOT and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HR 3288) has been passed in different form by both chambers. The Senate requested a conference committee Sept. 17, but the House has so far not appointed its conferees. The reason for the delay is uncertain as the DOT/HUD bill does not contain some of the politically controversial items that have slowed progress on other appropriations legislation.

## TRANSPORTATION SECRETARY ANNOUNCE ADMINISTRATION-WIDE EFFORT TO COMBAT DISTRACTED DRIVING

At the conclusion of a two-day summit on distracted driving in Washington, D.C., U.S. Transportation Secretary, Ray LaHood, announced a series of concrete actions the Obama Administration and the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) are taking to help put an end to distracted driving.

President Obama signed an Executive Order directing federal employees not to engage in text messaging while driving government-owned vehicles; when using electronic equipment supplied by the government while driving; or while driving privately owned vehicles when they're on official government business. The order also encourages federal contractors and others doing business with the government to adopt and enforce their own policies banning texting while driving on the job.

"This order sends a very clear signal to the American public that distracted driving is dangerous and unacceptable. It shows that the federal government is leading by example," said Secretary LaHood. "I fully expect that all 58,000 DOT employees and contractors will take this order seriously. Let's show our friends and families that we can resist the temptation to answer the phone, send a message, or allow some other distraction to interfere with our driving."

Secretary LaHood pledged to work with Congress to ensure that the issue of distracted driving is appropriately addressed. He also announced a number of immediate actions the Department is taking to combat distracted driving, including the Department's plan to create three separate rulemakings that would consider:

- Making permanent restrictions on the use of cell phones and other electronic devices in rail operations.
- Banning text messaging altogether, and restrict the use of cell phones by truck and interstate bus operators.
- Disqualifying school bus drivers convicted of texting while driving, from maintaining their commercial driver's licenses.

The Secretary also called on state and local governments to work with USDOT to reduce fatalities and crashes by making distracted driving part of their state highway plans, and by continuing to pass state and local laws against distracted driving in all types of vehicles, especially school buses. He asked states and local governments to back up public awareness campaigns with high-visibility enforcement actions. And he said the Department is establishing an on-line clearinghouse on the risks of distracted driving, aimed especially at young people, which will give them information to help encourage good decisions.

The two-day summit brought together safety experts, researchers, industry representatives, elected officials and members of the public who shared their expertise, experiences and ideas for reducing distracted driving behavior and addressed the safety risk posed by this growing problem across all modes of transportation. Authoritative speakers from around the nation led interactive sessions on a number of key topics including the extent and impact of distracted driving, current research, regulations and best practices. Individuals from 49 states participated in the summit via the web. Visit [www.dot.gov](http://www.dot.gov) to watch Secretary LaHood's video blog on distracted driving or view full webcast of the summit.

"Extension" continued from page 1.

offsets.


The Senate has yet to consider on the floor an 18-month extension bill approved by three committees that would extend highway and transit programs at Fiscal Year 2009 levels through March 2011. That approach has been resisted by House transportation leaders, who want to continue to press for action on a multiyear authorization. The six-month extension is seen as a compromise between the two chambers.

While it looks like another appropriations continuing resolution is likely, indications are that appropriators prefer to see a separate bill to extend surface transportation programs.

What remains unclear, however, is whether the House would be willing to agree to anything beyond an extension until year's end. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee leaders have said a shorter extension would allow Congress to complete a six-year bill before the new year. With a funding source not yet identified for the \$500 billion legislation being proposed, financing remains a major stumbling block to enactment of a six-year bill.

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## STRATEGIC HIGHWAY SAFETY PLAN

By Sue Miller, County Engineer, Freeborn County, MN and NACE Past President

NACE has been invited to sit on a national steering committee for the development of a national strategic highway safety plan. The following is an excerpt from a position statement being developed as a part of that effort.

### National SHSP – Toward Zero Death Visioning and the Local Perspective

The effort to eliminate fatal and serious injury crashes on our nation's highways must focus on rural two lane roadways which are significantly overrepresented in fatal crashes. The majority of the fatal crashes occur off state managed systems. Therefore, if we are to truly work to save lives and eliminate life changing crashes, a *national focus* on locally owned facilities is critical to our success.

Key components of this new national focus must include a strong local partnership with State and Federal leadership. The action plan should not be limited to infrastructure alone. The old adage that 'all politics is local' applies to impacting driver behavior; it's all local. National and state policies, marketing campaigns, education and grant programs will succeed or fail depending on implementation at the local level. Strong leadership at the state level is needed to engage local leaders and advocates in creating a culture change by informing and empowering engineering, education, emergency management, and enforcement communities. Collaboration between the 4 E's is imperative for successful programs at the local level.

The investment of traditional state or fed-

eral safety funds off the state system may be the biggest challenge especially in this time when our transportation system needs far exceed available resources. Technical resources at the state level may also be limited, but where expertise exists, it must be share with those on the local level. Leadership is needed at the state and federal level to effect policy and law that not only enables, but promotes the use of financial resources and state expertise on the local system.

Low cost safety projects, no matter whose system they are planned for, should move towards a more risk based approval process. The excessive project development costs and review time for certain project types (Example: curve delineation) could instead be invested in saving lives.

In summary, there are several core principals that come to the forefront when considering a nationwide strategy towards local and rural road safety.

### Collaboration of Federal, State and Local Partners

o *Leadership at the State and Federal and local levels to assist in understanding the specific problems, identifying appropriate solutions and responsibly implementing systematic low cost improvements at the local level across the four E's of engineering, emergency response, enforcement, and education.*

### Data Driven

o *Complete and consistent data collection and distribution for fatal and serious injury crashes on all public roadways, including local roadways, categorized by functional classification AND ownership.*

### Risk Based Approval (aka streamlining)

o *Systematic, low cost safety programs or solutions effectively implemented at the local level with accountability and transparency via a strong collaboration and leadership by all the partnerships.*

### Investment & Assessment

o *Accessibility to state and federal funding by local agencies for systematic improvements will result in reducing life changing crashes; the ultimate performance measure.*

### Knowledge Building/Sharing

o *Expanding the scope of knowledge through research and technology transfer and case studies of new or proven/successful implementations, not only of behavioral programs or infrastructure projects, but also organizational successes. Creating communities of practice within the state and local transportation communities and within non-traditional partners will be necessary.*

### Public Relations and Marketing

o *Communicating with community leaders and the public as a whole the visionary culture change needed to implement life saving public policy.*

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## INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT WILL IT OCCUR?

By Tom Stoner, County Engineer, Harrison County, IA and NACE South Central V.P.

Back in February of this year, I began my article by telling you that I was concerned and frustrated. In that article I lamented the lack of activity by both state and national legislators aimed at improving the condition and the future of our transportation infrastructure. I quoted from a December 2006 study in Iowa that indicated that our system was deteriorating at an alarming rate. **SOMETHING HAD TO BE DONE!**

Well, Bob, “the times, they are [not] a-changin.”

That 2006 study has been updated to reflect changes between then and now. The follow-up study indicates that our “back-logged” needs are becoming even more overwhelming. Construction costs have risen by 26% over that two-year period. Our basic funding needs, to simply maintain the currently deficient status quo, have risen from \$200 million annually to \$267 million annually.

The study concludes that, “Absent additional revenue for the public roadway system, Iowans can expect a dramatic decrease in pavement and bridge conditions in the coming years. In addition, congestion in and around urban areas and along much of the Interstate (rural and urban) will increase significantly. Finally, corridor improvements on the Commercial and Industrial Network will not be addressed.

All of these impacts to the public roadway system end up damaging Iowa’s economy. Transportation costs will increase in both the

public and business sectors and opportunities for economic development will be lost to other states.” (I think I can “hear” Sue Miller smiling as I write this.)

To respond to this crisis the Iowa legislators established a “TIME-21” fund. This is the fund that was designed to quickly collect and distribute that additional \$267 million in revenue to the various systems so that we could get the turn-around underway. Then, rather than actually addressing an increase in gas tax, (the only real income stream that could to begin to cover the \$267 million shortfall), they “tweaked” a few other minor user fees to provide an embarrassingly small percentage of the needed funds. And most of those changes were spread out over several years.

But still, the good news WAS that the legislators were prepared to address the gas tax issue in the NEXT session. Bipartisan support was strong in both chambers and the Governor was certainly indicating an open mind to the issue.

**THEN IT HAPPENED, . . . . . THE FEDERAL STIMULUS!**

Suddenly, in the blink of an eye, all of the infrastructure and economic woes of the country had been saved from the brink. Our people were going back to work, our industries were about to be revitalized and our crumbling infrastructure was headed toward recovery.

But the stimulus served another important function . . . . it provided all of the political cover that was needed by legislators, locally and nationwide, to oppose any consideration of a gas tax increase.

Our state legislators got onto the borrowing bandwagon and bonded for even more

infrastructure money. Heck, why just borrow from our kids and our grandchildren? Let’s get the great grand kids in the mix, too.

Then county road professionals’ phones began to ring. And the Board meetings got busy. And the public got excited. And the media got their spinners spinning. “Our long national nightmare [was] over”.

After all, with nearly \$800 billion available; no job was too small, or too large, no bridge was too far, and no dust could possibly remain fugitive much longer. The cries rang out from across the land, “when is my road getting paved?”

So as our legislators relentlessly study the funding problem; we out here in flyover country struggle to find a way to explain to our customers why we are continuing to close their roads, and bridges. And God help us if Al’s global warming doesn’t kick in fast enough to bail us out this winter.

And while we are wrestling with the fallout of this funding stagnation, those in charge in Washington seem to have determined that the Federal Bridge Replacement program is unnecessary, and the High Risk Rural Roads safety effort is not really worthy of much support. And, of course, there’s that pesky “waters of the United States” definition to address.

Oh, and did I mention the fact that the Federal Highway Trust Fund is broke, . . . . again?

Locally, we are now being challenged to figure out a way to finance and build stronger bridges so that our farmers can haul heavier loads, which will then lead to the need for even stronger bridges, so they can haul even heavier . . . . I think you see where I’m going here.

I know what you’re thinking; I’m being too optimistic. Surely there is some way this grand scheme could end badly. I guess we’ll have to wait and see. Luckily for most of you out there these problems are unique to Iowa.

Actually there is some good news. I just heard on CNN from a “highly placed current administration official”, that the worst of the recession is over. Signs of economic recovery are already evident. Recalling that our legislators only deferred from addressing an increase in fuel tax “during this current recession”; I guess the money is about to flow again. And I’m sure that all other State’s legislators will follow suit soon afterwards.

Happy days are here again. They surely wouldn’t be hesitant to pass a State gas tax increase just because the Federal gas tax will be increased, or the fact that it will be an election year . . . . would they?

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## MINNESOTA REPORT

By Greg Isakson, County Engineer, Goodhue County, MN and NACE State Director

Greetings from the great state of Minnesota! In light of a poor economy and tight budgets, I would to discuss how some Minnesota counties have found money for road construction.

**Local Funding for Local Roads:** It seems that every discussion about funding these days revolves around levy reductions and doing more work with less money. Sometimes the best defense against a bad situation is a good offense, and several counties here in Minnesota have proactively worked with their County Boards to protect (and in some cases increase) the local funding being provided for their local road system.

Don Theisen in Washington County implemented a strong pavement management system that integrates his actual construction costs, pavement histories, pavement deterioration curves and current pavement conditions. The program allows him to run numerous 'what if' scenarios such as 'what will the pavement condition be if we don't change our current funding levels and we assume 5% construction inflation', or 'how much do we need to annually invest to keep the pavement condition the same, or to increase to a 65'? After explaining this to his Commissioners in several workshops, his Commissioners have a better understanding of their system's funding needs, understand what could happen if the funding levels fall and are more supportive of funding increases. One result of his work is his Board's willingness to bond several million dollars every year for transporta-

tion infrastructure.

Anita Benson spent several workshops with her Commissioners and discussed the level of funding their road system needs to remain functional for the citizens of Steele County. A major concern of hers was funding for County Roads that do not receive any proceeds from the State Gas Tax. In one public meeting, she was discussing funding options including turning paved roads back to gravel roads when one citizen angrily stated that option was flat out unacceptable. Anita replied that she would not have to take any action for this option to occur, that based on the current trends of increasing construction costs, and a steady decline in the condition of Steele County's pavements this scenario is the default option that will happen if nothing is done to increase funding. After working on this issue for several months, the County Board sold bonds for \$7 million to be used strictly on the County- Aid road system of Steele County. As a side note, Anita previously worked for Lyon County in western Minnesota and was successful in convincing that Board of Commissioners to sell bonds worth \$5 million for Lyon County's local (non- State Aid) road system. (I think she has it figured out!)

Besides Don and Anita, five other Minnesota Counties have bonded anywhere from \$1million to \$16 million in the past few years for transportation infrastructure.

Here in Goodhue County, the Commissioners are concerned with major construction projects along a US highway that the County will need to help fund when these projects are built. The Board increased the annual high-

way construction funding by \$450,000 several years ago to establish a reserve for these projects; and they also realize that bonding will be required to fund the county portion of these major regional projects.

As our President Chris Bauserman mentioned in the September 2009 'NACE News', this is a very important time to remind your commissioners 'how important our local road system is to our communities', to remind them 'that no other service provided by our county government is used by more people on a daily basis' and 'that a well maintained, safe and efficient road system is a key part of the quality of life for those we serve.'

Keep this issue in front of them and use that engineering mind of yours to find options that will help your board find ways to keep your system 'well maintained, safe and efficient'. Good Luck!

P.S. Remember NACE 2011 in Minneapolis!

## REQUESTS FOR TIGER GRANTS FAR EXCEED FUNDING AVAILABILITY

State transportation departments and other government entities have requested \$57 billion in discretionary grants from the U.S. Department of Transportation's new TIGER program, the department announced this afternoon.

"We have received an outpouring of creative and innovative transportation project proposals from across the country," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood. "Through the TIGER grants we will begin to seriously address the 21st century transportation challenges of improving our environment, the livability of our communities, [and] enhancing safety while strengthening our economy."

The Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery program was created by Congress in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Applications for the \$1.5 billion in available competitive grants were due last week. U.S. DOT said today that it has received 1,381 applications valued at \$57 billion — 38 times the amount of funding available. Every state and four territories have applied for funds.

U.S. DOT said that more than half of applications are for highway and bridge projects with the rest of requests focused on transit, railroad, port infrastructure, and multimodal investments. LaHood announced in July that grant awards will be made no later than January, a month prior to the Feb. 17 deadline. More information is available at [tinyurl.com/TIGERprogram](http://tinyurl.com/TIGERprogram). More information about grant applications can be found at <http://www.dot.gov/recovery/docs/tdgappoverview.pdf>.

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 In addition to on-line registration and PDF files of brochures, see information on conference overview, travel, hotel, golf outing and more!

**NOMINATING COMMITTEE INTERESTED IN NEW OFFICERS FOR 2010—2011**

The NACE Nominating Committee is accepting nominations for 2010-2011 NACE officers. The positions of President-elect, Secretary-Treasurer, and Regional Vice Presidents for the Northeast and South Central regions will be on the ballot this year. Nominations should be sent to the Nominations Committee Chair, Sue Miller by **November 30, 2009** so that they can be reviewed, assembled for distribution to the membership. You can submit your own name. A brief biography and photograph should be included. Nominations and/or questions should be directed to Sue Miller at (507) 377-5188 or email: [sue.miller@co.freeborn.mn.us](mailto:sue.miller@co.freeborn.mn.us)

**IT'S TIME TO NOMINATE DESERVING NACE MEMBERS AS "ENGINEER OF THE YEAR"  
OR "PROGRAM/PROJECT MANAGER OF THE YEAR"**

Each year the NACE Awards Committee reviews nominated individuals for the "Urban Engineer of the Year", "Rural Engineer of the Year" and "Program/Project Manager of the Year" awards. The rules and criterion can be found by visiting the NACE website [www.countyengineers.org](http://www.countyengineers.org) under Programs and Committee section. In addition, each NACE Board member has copies of the forms. We encourage each NACE state affiliate organization to submit their nominations (5 copies) by **December 31, 2009** to Ken Stone, Director of Asset Management and Sustainability, 207 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, N., Kelso, WA 98626-4189. For more information contact Ken at (360) 577-3030; email: [stonek@co.cowlitz.wa.us](mailto:stonek@co.cowlitz.wa.us)

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**National Association of County Engineers**  
 25 Mass Ave NW, Suite 580  
 Washington, DC 20001-1454  
[www.countyengineers.org](http://www.countyengineers.org)  
 (202) 393-5041

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