

# TRIP Report: West Virginia's Transportation Program Facing \$5 Billion Shortfall



West Virginia faces a transportation funding shortfall of \$5 billion over the next ten years, and unless this funding gap is addressed many transportation projects will remain unfunded. This fact is according to a transportation report released in July 2009 by TRIP and West Virginians for Better Transportation. TRIP is a Washington, DC-based nonprofit organization that researches, evaluates and distributes information on highway transportation issues.

According to TRIP's research, the West Virginia Department of Transportation estimates that \$9.75 billion will be needed through 2018 to improve road and bridge conditions, enhance economic development, provide needed safety measures and relieve traffic congestion. However, the state estimates that only \$5 billion will be available during that time.

The report notes that more than one-third of West Virginia's roads are in poor or mediocre condition, 37 percent of the state's bridges are deficient, and the traffic fatality rate is the third highest in the nation. The new report, entitled

"Future Mobility in West Virginia: Meeting the State's Need for Safe and Efficient Mobility," was released at a WVBT press conference held under the construction of the new I-64 bridge in South Charleston, W.Va.

The TRIP report notes that driving on roads in need of repair costs each West Virginia motorist an average of \$280 annually and \$371 million statewide in the form of accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional repair costs, and increased fuel consumption and tire wear. The report contains a list of needed roadway repair and reconstruction projects throughout the state that currently lack adequate funding to proceed.

## Additional Trouble Ahead

The current federal transportation program, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), expired on September 30, 2009. This will require Congress to authorize a new federal surface transportation program or to extend the current program. Recent declines in federal surface transportation revenues, as well as significant increases in the cost of transportation construction materials, will make it more difficult for Congress to authorize new, adequately-funded federal surface transportation legislation.

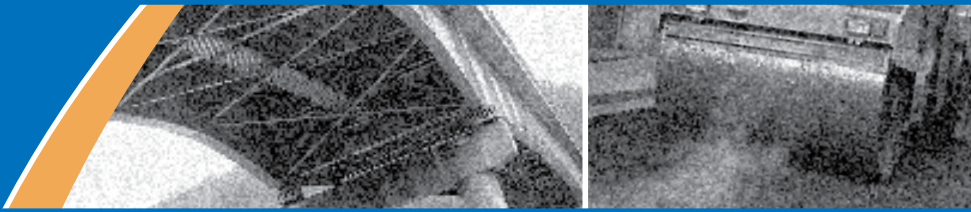


## The Warning Signs

- More than **one-third** of West Virginia's roads are in **poor or mediocre** condition.
- **37%** of the state's bridges are **deficient**.
- The state's traffic **fatality rate** is the nation's **third highest**.
- Driving on roads in need of repair **costs** each West Virginia **motorist** an average of **\$280 annually and \$371 million statewide**.
- From March 2004 - March 2009, the average **cost of materials** used for highway construction – including asphalt, concrete, steel, lumber and diesel – **increased by 40%**.
- Unless West Virginia can address this **funding gap**, many sorely needed transportation projects will **remain unfunded**.

### More information:

**TRIP** [www.tripnet.org](http://www.tripnet.org) / **WVBT** [www.keepwvmoving.org](http://www.keepwvmoving.org)



# Letter from the Chairman

## Maintain Investment In WVBT, Transportation



**Joe Deneault | Chairman**

West Virginia's transportation funding challenges are growing, as corroborated in the 2009 TRIP report. Now more than ever, our leaders — business leaders, labor leaders, elected officials, etc. — need to come together to develop a long-term solution. Another key group that needs to get engaged is the citizenry of West Virginia. Here are some key reasons why all West Virginians should care:

- West Virginia's traffic fatality rate of 2.10 fatalities per 100 million miles of

travel is the third highest in the country, and 54 percent higher than the national average. Good roads, bridges and highways are part of saving lives and preventing injuries.

- Of the state's bridges that are 20 feet or longer, 15 percent are structurally deficient and another 22 percent are functionally obsolete. Many bridges have weight limits, which can force trucks, school buses and emergency vehicles to take alternate routes, which are time-consuming and gas-wasting.
- Driving on roads in need of repair costs each West Virginia motorist an average of \$280 annually, \$371 million statewide, in the form of additional vehicle repair costs, accelerated vehicle depreciation and increased fuel consumption and tire wear. So, people are going to pay one way or the other.

As indicated in the TRIP report, the W.Va. DOT estimates that \$9.75 billion will be needed through 2018 to improve road and bridge conditions, enhance economic development, provide needed safety measures and relieve traffic congestion. However, it is projected our state will have only \$5 billion available during this time.

Will Congress bail us out? Not likely. Currently, West Virginia gets about \$500 million each year in federal highway funds. But given the massive increase in federal debt due to the recession, Congress will have problems finding new dollars or raising federal gasoline taxes.

Also, significant increases in the cost of transportation construction materials will make it more costly to undertake new, adequately-funded transportation projects.

West Virginia's leaders must understand that our transportation crisis is serious and will grow much worse in the coming years unless something is done to address this situation. It is critically important for the Governor, the Legislature and all West Virginians to come together and develop a long-term funding solution for our roads, bridges and highways.

I also encourage all supporters of WVBT to maintain their commitments to our campaign and to help fund our ongoing efforts.



Joe Deneault, Chairman

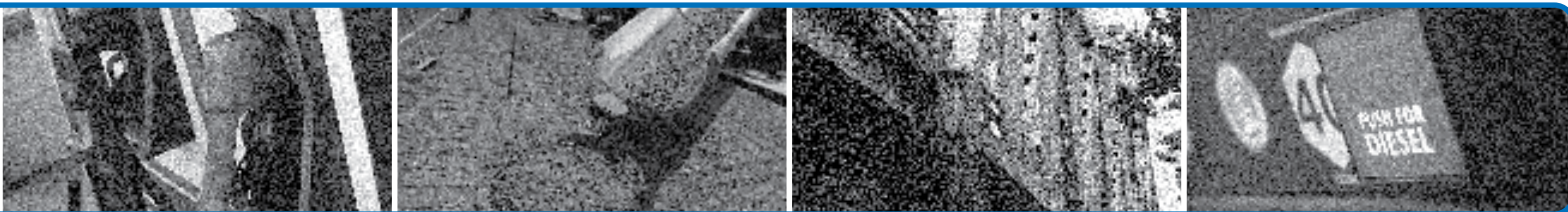
## About WVBT

West Virginians for Better Transportation is a statewide coalition working to educate West Virginians about the importance of maintaining a safe and modern transportation infrastructure. The coalition includes nearly 270 organizations, groups, government leaders and companies that recognize and value the importance of a good surface transportation system. The coalition is spearheading an education campaign called "Keep West

Virginia Moving," designed to generate public awareness of the state transportation system and foster debate about the ability to meet current and future needs.

For more information, please visit: [www.keepwvmoving.org](http://www.keepwvmoving.org).





# WVBT Holds First Statewide Transportation Conference



West Virginians for Better Transportation held its first statewide conference on November 10, 2009 in Beckley, W.Va., with nearly 170 people from across the state filling the meeting center to full capacity. The conference featured prominent officials and others who discussed the current and future funding challenges facing roads, bridges and highways.

The conference provided the attendees with updates on the state's plans as well as information regarding the outlook for state and federal funding. Among the speakers were Congressman Nick Rahall, Governor Joe Manchin and W.Va. DOT Secretary Paul Mattox. In addition, key state legislative leaders provided their perspectives on West Virginia's transportation needs.

The two main items of focus during the conference were news that the state's transportation revenues are starting to decline, and that Congress is struggling with approval of a new federal highway funding plan. Both pose new challenges for maintaining or expanding the state's road, bridge and highway system.

Governor Manchin said he recognizes that more needs to be done in the area of transportation, but noted that "money is getting scarce." Manchin said he doesn't think the state can expect to rely solely on gasoline and privilege taxes in the future, and that "we have to find another funding

source." He asked that the conference attendees help to identify new, creative funding scenarios.

Mattox echoed the governor's views. He also noted that recent commodity price hikes are further straining the state's efforts to maintain the existing infrastructure and to meet new transportation needs.

Congressman Nick Rahall, who is Vice Chairman of the powerful U.S. House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, said Congress must act now to enact a new long-term highway funding program. "The best second stimulus we can have is reauthorization of the federal highway funding program," Rahall stated. However, he said the U.S. House and U.S. Senate have major disagreements about how to pay for the nation's transportation needs.



Congressman Rahall, like the Governor, said he is uneasy about continued reliance on a gas tax for transportation funding, and that he is open to all options of new funding sources.

"This conference provided a timely opportunity to discuss these issues and to allow several of our leaders to share their views," said Joe Deneault, Chairman of WVBT. "All WVBT coalition supporters and community leaders need to continue the education effort that something must be done so our state has a safe and efficient transportation system."

**2009 WEST VIRGINIA  
TRANSPORTATION  
CONFERENCE**

**SEEKING SOLUTIONS FOR  
WEST VIRGINIA'S TRANSPORTATION NEEDS**  
NOVEMBER 10, 2009

<p style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">PRESENTED BY:</p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">CONFERENCE SPONSOR:</p>
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# WVBT's 2009 Weekly Gas Tax Giveaway Contest Generates Thousands Of Entries



Nearly 2,500 West Virginians have a better understanding about how much they pay each year in state gasoline taxes. This is thanks to a contest program held this summer by West Virginians for Better Transportation (WVBT). The 2009 Gas Tax Calculator Giveaway provided eight winners with a \$250 gasoline debit card. The winners were randomly selected over the eight-week contest period.

WVBT launched the contest on July 20. The prize amount was intended to cover a

person's average state gasoline taxes for a one year period, which is about \$250. This is the second year that WVBT sponsored the contest promoting the use of the coalition's gas tax calculator on its website.

Visitors to [www.keepwvmoving.org](http://www.keepwvmoving.org) are directed to the calculator so they can determine their gasoline taxes based on certain variables, such as average amount of travel and a vehicle's gasoline mileage rate. The contest sought to educate more West Virginians about how they contribute to the state's transportation system.

"This online calculator has turned out to be a timely and useful tool in our ongoing education mission," said Joe Deneault, WVBT chairman. "Many West Virginians still do not have a clear idea of just what amount they are paying toward the maintenance, repair and construction of our state's transportation infrastructure."



WEST VIRGINIANS FOR BETTER TRANSPORTATION

## WVBT Gas Tax Contest Winners

Congratulations to the eight contest winners who received a \$250 gas debit card.

- **Sherri Anderson**  
Lerona, Mercer County
- **Mike Nestor**  
Hedgesville, Berkeley County
- **Farris Burton**  
West Hamlin, Lincoln County
- **James Bull**  
Weirton, Hancock County
- **Susan Mollohan**  
Charleston, Kanawha County
- **Ross Swiger**  
Harpers Ferry, Jefferson County
- **Shirley LaPann**  
Parkersburg, Wood County
- **Craig Nickerson**  
Wheeling, Ohio County

## 2009 EXPO Contest Winner



Congratulations to Eric Sharp (left) with the Mid-Atlantic LECT. He was selected from more than 600 other registrants to be the lucky winner of a new 42-inch plasma TV.

The giveaway was a promotional campaign hosted by West Virginians for Better Transportation, and it was held as part of the 30th Annual W.Va. Construction & Design Exposition March 2009 at the Charleston Civic Center.

The annual EXPO brings together hundreds of companies to showcase their goods, services and products to the state's construction, engineering and architectural industries. Approximately 6,000 people from across the United States attend the EXPO to see new products, talk to knowledgeable exhibitors and attend seminars.

## Any Questions?

Visit WVBT's web site for more information on the gas tax calculator, recent news articles, coalition partners and coalition events: [www.keepwvmoving.org](http://www.keepwvmoving.org)