



Please pass this information along to your members, employees, coworkers and friends.

First Winner Announced In WVBT Weekly Gas Tax Giveaway Contest

Enter today -- seven more winners will be selected over the coming weeks

Sherri Anderson of Lerona, Mercer County, was chosen Friday as the first winner of West Virginians for Better Transportation's 2009 Gas Tax Calculator Giveaway. Anderson was randomly selected out of hundreds of entrants to the contest and will receive a \$250 gasoline debit card.



West Virginians for Better Transportation (WVBT) launched the contest on July 20. The prize is intended to cover a person's average state gasoline taxes for a one-year period, which is about \$250.

Anderson actually pays less than that average. She drives approximately 34 miles per day, getting an average of 30 miles per gallon on her vehicle. With the \$250 prize, Grantham will be able to cover nearly two years of her state gasoline taxes.

This is the second year that West Virginians for Better Transportation is sponsoring the contest, which is designed to promote use of the coalition's gas tax calculator tool on its website. Visitors use the calculator to determine his or her gasoline taxes based on certain variables, such as average amount of travel and a vehicle's gasoline mileage rate. The contest seeks to draw further attention to this calculator and, in turn, educate more West Virginians on how they are contributing to support the state's transportation system.

As part of WVBT's contest, a \$250 gasoline debit card will be provided to a selected individual each week for the next several weeks (until Labor Day Weekend 2009). Eight winners will be selected. Individuals must enter by completing the on-line gas tax calculator.

To access WVBT's gas tax calculator and enter the "2009 Gas Tax Calculator Giveaway", go to <http://www.keepwvmoving.org/gastax/default.aspx>.

GAS TAX FACTS

State gasoline taxes are the major revenue source for West Virginia's Road Fund, accounting for approximately 60 percent. The money is used for a variety of transportation-related activities, including:

- Paving (except roads maintained by cities)
- Maintenance and repairs to state roads and highways
- Bridge construction and repair work
- Snow removal services on state roads, bridges, highways and Interstates
- Guardrails and other road safety barriers
- As a match for transportation funding from the federal government

Commentary: We Can't Neglect Highways

(Editor's Note: Provided is a reprint of a commentary by Joe Deneault, Chairman of WVBT, that was published in the July 22, 2009 edition of The Charleston Gazette)

West Virginia faces a transportation funding shortfall of \$5 billion over the next 10 years, and unless West Virginia addresses this funding gap soon, many sorely needed transportation projects will remain unfunded. Worse still, the state's funding shortcomings will cause existing problems to worsen - more than one-third of West Virginia's roads are in poor or mediocre condition, and 37 percent of the state's bridges are deficient.

These are the distressing facts contained in a new transportation report by TRIP and West Virginians for Better Transportation. TRIP is a Washington D.C. non-profit organization that researches, evaluates and distributes information on highway transportation. West Virginians for Better Transportation is a statewide coalition working to educate the public and elected leaders about the problems we face with our roads, bridge and highway infrastructure.

"Future Mobility in West Virginia: Meeting the State's Need for Safe and Efficient Mobility" provides a list of needed projects that remain unfunded, including road and bridge repairs and projects to enhance economic development.

Here are some other reasons why all West Virginians should care:

- Driving on roads in need of repair costs each West Virginia motorist an average of \$280 annually, \$371 million statewide, in the form of accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional repair costs and increased fuel consumption and tire wear. So, people are going to pay one way or the other.
- 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 of these bridges have weight limits, which can force trucks, school buses and emergency vehicles to take alternate routes, which are time-consuming and gas-wasting.

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.

Will Congress bail us out? Not likely.

Currently, West Virginia gets about \$500 million in federal highway funds. But, the current federal transportation program expires on Sept. 30. This will require 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 West Virginia.

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. Smaller states such as West Virginia that have mountainous terrain may have to fight even more with the urban states to maintain its existing share of federal highway dollars.

The state recently did receive about \$211 million in federal stimulus funding for highway and bridge improvements and \$19 million for public transit improvements, but this funding will serve only as a small down payment on needed improvements. It is not sufficient to allow the state to proceed with numerous projects needed to modernize its surface transportation system. It is estimated that West Virginia has more than \$20 billion in unmet projects.

As one can read, West Virginia faces enormous deficiencies in road and bridge funding. The federal stimulus package will not make as big of an impact as we had hoped. And with a projected deficit of \$5 billion in surface transportation needs over the next 10 years, we believe it is critically important for the governor, the legislature and the Department of Transportation to come together and develop a long-term funding solution for our roads, bridges and highways. 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 it.

Deneault is chairman of West Virginians for Better Transportation. More information is also available at tripnet.org.

Help Support WVBT's Ongoing Efforts

Now more than ever WVBT needs financial support from coalition partners and companies. If your organization or company would like to help sustain the coalition's ongoing campaign or would like to get more information about West Virginians for Better Transportation, please send an email to info@keepwvmoving.org. Someone would be happy to contact you.

For more information about West Virginians for Better Transportation, please go to www.keepwvmoving.org.

To opt out of this email system, please send your request to info@keepwvmoving.org.