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## **Legislation To Be Introduced To Expand Toll Roads In West Virginia, DOT Secretary Says**

Provided below is a news article that highlights some of the comments provided by W.Va. Transportation Secretary Paul Mattox during a meeting earlier this week of the Senate Transportation Committee. Several committee members expressed concerns during the meeting about the funding challenges facing the state's roads, bridges and highways. Secretary Mattox responded that his department has more needs than available resources, and that price increases are cutting significantly into what can be accomplished. Specifically, Mattox noted that the state's annual paving budget – even after increases – will be able to cover only one-half of the roads it did several years ago.

### **Lawmakers consider new toll roads, including U.S. 35**

*The Charleston Gazette, January 21, 2010*

CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- West Virginia could have as many as three new toll roads -- including U.S. 35 in Putnam and Mason counties -- under legislation Gov. Joe Manchin is advocating.

Transportation Secretary Paul Mattox said Tuesday the Manchin administration will be introducing legislation as early as today to expand the powers of the state Parkways Authority to operate additional toll roads in the state.

Mattox told the Senate Transportation Committee he's hopeful the legislation will allow the authority to sell bonds to complete the final 14.6-mile section of the U.S. 35 upgrade. "It is our hope that we will have legislation that will allow us to look at U.S. 35 and complete it as a toll road," he said.

Mattox said U.S. 35 is one of only two highway projects in the state that are projected to produce enough traffic to justify operating as toll roads. The other is U.S. 522 in Morgan County in the Eastern Panhandle.

"You've got to have enough traffic on the road to justify a toll," Mattox said. He said U.S. 35 would be able to pay for itself through the use of tolls.

As proposed, Parkways would operate one or more toll plazas along a 30-mile stretch of U.S. 35 between Henderson, in western Mason County, and W.Va. 34 near Teays Valley.

Also, Mattox said the West Virginia section of the Mon-Fayette Expressway, linking Interstate 68 in Monongalia County to Pittsburgh, will be a toll road when it comes on line later this year. He said the state has signed an agreement with the Pennsylvania Turnpike Authority to collect West Virginia's portion of the toll for the 4.2-mile section of the 70-mile expressway that will be in the Mountain State. A portion of the tolls collected at a toll plaza just north of the state line will be remitted to West Virginia each month, Mattox said.

Mattox said West Virginia is having to look at alternate ways to build and maintain highways, as the traditional funding sources of the state gas tax, vehicle registration fees and privilege taxes have been stagnant for years. At the same time, costs of road construction and maintenance have soared.

**Mattox noted that in 1996, the Division of Highways had a \$116.7 million budget for paving projects, which was enough to pave 1,371 miles of roadway. Last year, the budget for paving had grown to \$160 million -- but with soaring costs for asphalt and other road-building materials, it was enough to pave only 613 miles of road.**

At the current rate, any given road in the state will be repaved only once every 36 years - when the preferred paving cycle is once every 12 years, he said.

Mattox said the infusion of \$221 million in federal stimulus funds for state road construction was a "much-needed shot in the arm," but said the stimulus funds, "by no means could address all of West Virginia's or the nation's needs."

Each year, he noted, West Virginia spends more than \$500 million of state and federal funds on road construction and maintenance.

## **New WVBT Partners – 2010**

Listed below are new partners to the West Virginians for Better Transportation coalition, which now numbers close to 300 companies, organizations, government leaders and civic groups.

**Tecvac, Inc.**  
**Frost Line Consulting, LLC**

For those interested in adding their names as new partners, please click here:  
<http://www.keepwvmoving.org/getactive/signup.aspx>

## **Help Support WVBT's Ongoing Efforts In 2010**

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](mailto:info@keepwvmoving.org).** Someone would be happy to contact you.

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For more information about West Virginians for Better Transportation, please go to  
[www.keepwvmoving.org](http://www.keepwvmoving.org).

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