



Regional Meeting Campaign Report

January 22, 2008

Introduction

With needs growing and dollars shrinking, West Virginia continues along a path toward a looming transportation crisis. Like many other states, West Virginia is struggling to keep up with maintaining and repairing its current road, bridge and highway system. Compounding the situation, future funding projections provide an even greater reason for concern.

West Virginians for Better Transportation (WVBT) is a coalition working to educate West Virginians – and our elected leaders, in particular – about the importance of maintaining a safe, efficient and modern transportation infrastructure. The coalition reaches out to a wide spectrum of organizations that rely on and value the importance of a good surface transportation system.

WVBT is spearheading a statewide education campaign, “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.

As part of its campaign, WVBT recently completed a series of statewide meetings highlighting transportation needs and the state’s challenges to meet those needs due to expected funding constraints and even shortages. The meetings were held in six locations around the state and were co-sponsored by the West Virginia Municipal League and the West Virginia Association of Counties.

This report is the result of those meetings. It contains information on the purpose of the meetings, efforts to coordinate appropriate locations and desired attendees and comments and suggestions provided. The report also contains a conclusion section featuring a series of recommendations based upon the information gleaned.

WVBT will be providing this document to a variety of leaders and organizations, including:

- Governor Joe Manchin III
- West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) Secretary Paul Mattox and other WVDOT officials
- West Virginia Legislature
- Members of West Virginia’s Congressional Delegation
- The West Virginia Municipal League
- The West Virginia Association of Counties
- WVBT partners, which now numbers nearly 240

The reason for this report is simple. Transportation funds for maintenance, repairs and paving are becoming more and more constrained, major transportation projects do not have funding sources and without proper planning and action, the problems could soon turn into a full-fledged crisis.

West Virginia’s leaders – at all levels -- must focus on this situation now, and all West Virginians in our different regions and communities must join in a discussion about what should be done to maintain, preserve and expand our state’s transportation network of roads, bridges and highways. We must determine how much we want to spend on transportation and how we are going to generate the necessary dollars.

There is no question that our state's transportation needs far outweigh current dollars and the forecast for added revenues looks bleak.

Background

Since its official launch in August 2006, the West Virginians for Better Transportation coalition has worked to inform West Virginians and state leaders about the state's pending transportation crisis. Significant progress has been made in this education effort, and today more and more people are realizing the importance of the issue.

Although transportation was becoming mentioned more frequently, WVBT determined that a forum for more in-depth discussion would be helpful for local and state leaders.

So in July 2007, West Virginians for Better Transportation planned a series of regional meetings that would take place in key locations and media centers across the state:

- Beckley
- Charleston
- Huntington
- Martinsburg
- Morgantown
- Wheeling

All sessions were scheduled for 1.5 hours, but many exceeded the allotted time. Invitees to the meetings included:

- Legislators
- Congressional delegates
- Mayors and other city officials
- County commissioners and other county officials
- Economic development groups
- Business leaders
- Local transportation groups

To bolster attendance and recognition for the meetings, WVBT partnered with the West Virginia Municipal League and the West Virginia Association of Counties. Both organizations were extremely supportive and resourceful throughout the entire process.

The agenda for the events began with a presentation from WVBT Chairman Joe Deneault. Deneault's presentation, which is included in Appendix A, provided factual information about the current and future state of West Virginia's infrastructure, as well as current funding levels and projected funding in the future.

After the presentation concluded, Mr. Deneault asked for attendees' thoughts, opinions and potential solutions on fixing the growing transportation crisis. More on the attendees' comments is included in a later section of this report.

In addition to inviting local government and community leaders, media outlets were also encouraged to attend. WVBT targeted the media to increase awareness of the state's transportation issues for the general public.

Please see Appendix C for the standard agenda for each regional meeting.

Please see Appendix D for media coverage of the regional meetings.

What Was Provided

The information WVBT shared with attendees is similar to the facts given throughout the organization's existence. The numbers simply speak for themselves:

- 27 percent of West Virginia's major roads are in poor or mediocre condition.
- 37 percent of West Virginia bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete.
- West Virginia's traffic fatality rate on non-interstate roads is nearly 50 percent higher than the national average.
- Travel on West Virginia's interstate highways is expected to increase by 67 percent by the year 2026.

Additional information centered on financial forecasts provided by WVDOT:

- West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOH) has stated it needs an additional \$350 million per year to keep up with statewide ongoing road, bridge and highway construction and maintenance needs.
- West Virginia's list of proposed road, bridge and highway construction projects totals more than \$20 billion. Currently, only 8 percent of these 170 projects will be funded in the next 24 years.
- The Secretary of the WVDOT has stated that West Virginia will need to find other sources of revenue in order to meet the staggering list of construction projects that communities want and need.
- WVDOT is projecting that overall funding for transportation will decline over the next five years (2008-2012).
 - Revenue during that time period will decrease more by more than 4 percent, while expenditures will increase by more than 7 percent.
 - Money available for state-funded improvements during that time will decrease by more than 39 percent.

All of this information was provided in Mr. Deneault's presentation. Additionally, attendees received a packet with a copy of the presentation; an agenda for the meeting; a WVBT 2006-2007 Progress Report; a description of the County Infrastructure Improvement Bill (SB 673) that was passed in the 2006 legislative session; and a form to provide comments and suggestions.

Please see Appendix A for a full copy of Mr. Deneault's PowerPoint presentation.

What We Heard

In most instances, attendance at the meetings exceeded expectations. Generally, attendees included representatives from among these entities:

- Congressional delegates
- State government
- Municipal government
- County government
- Economic development groups
- Local transportation groups
- Local chambers of commerce
- Higher education
- Public transportation
- AAA
- Financial institutions
- Engineering companies
- Contracting companies
- Paving companies
- Coal companies
- Media outlets

Please see Appendix B for a full list of meeting attendees.

As previously mentioned, Chairman Deneault asked for comments from these attendees at the conclusion of each presentation. Attendees were also given a form to provide comments if they did not get a chance to during the meetings. Additionally, WVBT created a section on its website, www.keepwvmoving.org, that allowed people with an opportunity to provide remarks electronically at a later time.

Throughout the entire regional meeting campaign, WVBT received a significant number of comments in all formats. To provide a clearer picture of what was said, WVBT separated the comments into four categories and is providing an abridged, representative list for each

category. Please note that some comments are directly quoted, while others have been paraphrased.

Please visit www.keepwvmoving.org for the comment list in its entirety.

My Region vs. Others

- It's hard to ask people to pay when this region has been putting a lot of money in and not getting anything back.
- Unless my region is included, our people will not support the 6-year plan.
- Taxes collected never come here; bond issue money goes elsewhere.
- Local areas have very little input on where the money is spent. You're asking citizens to fund a list others chartered. The process is incumbent on local areas working together regionally and developing a list for the local areas.
- Local areas must work together. Compromises can be made.
- We need a different tax than the proposed service fee in Monongalia County because our problem is different.
- Most of the calls I receive from my delegation are highway-related, but when I see people, all they're discussing is the price of gasoline.
- Each community should pay its way on this issue.

Funding Commentary

- The Governor and the Legislature should give priority funding to roads, bridges, and other transportation infrastructure, not by adding new taxes, but by cutting spending elsewhere. There is too much waste; too many frills we could do without.
- We pay tolls in many other states we travel. Seems to be the most logical form of transportation funding. Those that use the roads, pay to use the roads.
- West Virginia should use lottery revenue to pay for transportation.
- We don't need an increase in the gas tax. It's a short-term solution at best.
- Make the privilege tax a sales tax and increase it to 6 percent.
- Could have user fees or public/private partnerships. Many local initiatives are possible.
- Toll roads are the best option.
- People are concerned about the service fee because there is no formula for the state to assist with that funding. There's no guarantee the funding will continue as is. That should be part of the legislation.

- Because coal trucks put extra strain on the infrastructure, a coal tax should be considered. They should pay for the damage they do.
- West Virginia should look at employment taxes.
- Most of these funding suggestions and solutions are regressive. Poor people are paying the same amount as the rich.
- West Virginia should consider land use and access fees.
- Impact fees on developers would help.
- We should focus the money on counties that have the potential for growth. The resulting economic development could pay for the other counties.
- We need lower taxes for businesses so they will relocate. Then we can build.
- We have to match federal funds. If we can't get new roads, we must take care of the roads we have.
- Research and develop alternative building materials and techniques that are less costly.
- A passage by the State Legislature of a County-Regional Transportation Fee generated by a modest increase from local/county gasoline sales on a regional/county basis. An example would be a consortium of 5-6 counties – all local increases in gasoline taxes would be spent within each county for road improvement and construction – those that use the local roads will support and benefit from this concept.
- Tolls should be increased for out-of-state drivers only.
- Heavyweight vehicles should pay more than the average citizen.
- We should study duplication in administration costs.
- West Virginia should look outside the box – look at taxing gambling, liquor, etc. Could also consider accidents caused by drunk drivers.

General Commentary

- The situation must become a crisis before people care.
- We need to show people how they will benefit first.
- We've been putting economic development before infrastructure. We must build roads before or while development is occurring.
- There is too much discussion and too little action.
- Safety should be a major priority. We have considerable congestion in this area.

- We should look at successful programs in other states and model solutions after those.
- Expand rail transport for long distance product improvement.
- We need comprehensive planning on a road system that allows for early/less costly land acquisition.
- Push the development of more efficient/less costly light transport, increasing life cycles of current roads.
- Recognize that money alone will not solve the problem. We need to rethink how we move people and goods, and provide services.
- The general public makes the decision. They tell me no new taxes period. People must request better transportation.

Federal Perspective

In addition to the comments provided by meeting attendees, WVBT had the opportunity to host two members of West Virginia's congressional delegation – Second District U.S. Representative Shelley Moore Capito and First District U.S. Representative Alan Mollohan. Rep. Capito attended the meeting in Charleston, and Rep. Mollohan attended in Morgantown. The federal perspective these officials provided only further highlighted the need for action on the state level.

Both officials encouraged the state to prepare for more heated battles over how federal transportation funding will be allocated. One concern is that larger, more populated states may push to change the current transportation funding formulas. At the present time, some states provide more in federal gasoline taxes than they get in return and vice versa for other states.

West Virginia is one state that receives more federal dollars than it contributes to the system. As the larger states push for a more "get what you put in" system, federal transportation funding for West Virginia could begin to decline even more than is projected.

Conclusion

As previously mentioned, West Virginians for Better Transportation used the regional meetings to help educate local leaders and others about the state's transportation challenges and to alert the public to the looming crisis. WVBT also worked to gather suggestions and ideas from the attendees. Based on these two objectives, the campaign was certainly a success.

Throughout the discussions, numerous recommendations were given to alleviate West Virginia's impending transportation crisis. Based upon these recommendations, WVBT concluded three major points for consideration moving forward:

1. West Virginia, along with its local communities, must look at existing and new funding options for transportation. All possible funding options must be considered and debated.
2. West Virginia must examine how other states are responding and ascertain what seems to be working and what has failed.

3. West Virginia must work to get all regions and the public involved in developing a long-term plan that will ensure a safe, efficient and modern transportation infrastructure.

The first point may seem obvious, but as one can see from the comments provided, numerous options exist that may have not been studied. Land-use fees, developer fees and lottery revenue are just a few examples of what was said.

It is important to note that the local fee system option was heavily discussed during the meetings. A major complaint about the current system is that the state decides how and where transportation funding is distributed. Many argued that a local fee, however structured, would allow for more local control, and in-turn, more local support.

The second point highlights the fact that transportation is a national issue, not just a problem in West Virginia. By studying what other states are doing, West Virginia might learn and benefit.

The third point has and will continue to be the heart of WVBT's message. Short-term fixes will only sustain the system for so long. Taking into account the future increases in construction costs and projected decreases in funding sources, a long-term solution must be developed. Moreover, West Virginians must decide what transportation projects – existing and new -- are to be funded and from where those funds are to be derived.

West Virginians for Better Transportation will continue to spread the word and educate our citizens and leaders about the challenges facing the transportation industry — now and in the near future. We must work together and collectively develop appropriate long-term solutions.

Appendix A



Hosts

- West Virginians for Better Transportation
- West Virginia Association of Counties
- West Virginia Municipal League

Agenda

- WVBT
- Overview of WV's transportation system
 - Condition, present situation
- Current funding levels, recent legislative changes
 - State
 - Federal
 - Impact of recent gasoline price volatility, swings

Agenda

- Report on the WVDOH's project prioritization
 - State Transportation Improvement Program
 - \$20 billion list of projects
- Discussion about the state's transportation funding outlook (2008-2012, beyond)
- Activities in other states
- Local input, response, views, suggestions

Who We Are

- Statewide education organization focused on West Virginia's transportation condition and needs
 - Roads
 - Bridges
 - Highways



Coalition

- Statewide Coalition – 225+ partners
 - WV Association of Counties
 - WV Economic Development Council
 - WV Municipal League
 - WV Chamber of Commerce
 - Constructors' Labor Council of WV
 - WV Labor Management Trust
 - WV Hospitality and Travel Association

Coalition

- Statewide Coalition – 225+ partners
 - Home Builders Association of WV
 - WV Association of CVBs
 - WV Manufacturers Association
 - WV Roundtable
 - Local chambers, CVBs, etc.
 - Yeager Airport
 - Numerous individual companies and firms

Strategies

- Making Transportation a Concern, Media Issue
- Educating State Leaders and the Public
- Long-term Plan

Our Objectives

1. Build a coordinated, statewide coalition of interested groups and individuals as part of educating key audiences about the state's transportation system and its future challenges.
2. Generate media coverage of the state's transportation system and challenges...gain editorial support.

Our Objectives

3. Foster public awareness of the state transportation system's ability to meet current and future needs ... with a goal of marshalling interest in a statewide plan of action.
4. Galvanize public opinion in appreciation of measures needed to maintain a safe and modern transportation infrastructure that meets the growth trends of West Virginia.
5. Focus education and collaboration efforts on state leaders and legislators.



The Issue: Transportation

Transportation Concerns

- Recent Minnesota bridge disaster highlights concerns, needs



Transportation Facts

- **Bridges:**
 - 37% of West Virginia bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete.
 - The average age of West Virginia's Interstate bridges is 34 years. Older bridges typically need significant repairs at approximately 50 years.
 - Nearly half (46%) of the bridges on the state's interstate highway system will need significant repairs by the year 2026.

Transportation Facts

- **Roads:**
 - 27% of West Virginia's major roads are in poor or mediocre condition.
 - West Virginia leads the country in percentage of narrow lanes - 67% of major roads are less than 10 feet wide.
 - Vehicle travel in West Virginia is expected to increase 40 percent by the year 2025 to approximately 28 billion VMT annually.
 - Miles of roads in West Virginia being paved each year has dropped 50% during the past five years.

Transportation Facts

- **Interstates:**
 - Travel on interstate highways is expected to increase by another 67% by the year 2026.
 - The state will need to add additional lanes along 142 miles of its existing 555-mile Interstate system by the year 2026 in order to relieve growing traffic congestion.
 - By 2026, nearly two-thirds (63%) of the state's Interstate highway system will be in need of significant rehabilitation or reconstruction.

Transportation Facts

- **Other facts:**
 - West Virginia's highway fatality rate is 50% above the national average; moving opposite national trend
 - West Virginia is 1 of 4 states responsible for all roads, bridges and highways
 - West Virginia has the 6th largest road and highway system in the nation

Transportation Facts

- **Other facts:**
 - West Virginia is 6th in the nation in percentage of bridges that are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete
 - Price hikes for materials, goods escalating
 - Current funding levels are inadequate

Transportation Needs

- WVDOH has stated it needs an additional \$350 million per year to keep up with statewide demand for highway construction and maintenance
- List of 170 transportation projects/needs surpasses \$20 billion (in today's dollars)

WVDOH Planning

- Report on the WVDOH's project prioritization
 - State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)
 - Evolved from the 6-year plan
- Currently, only 8% of those 170 projects will be funded in the next 24 years

Road Fund – W.Va.

- Current funding total: \$1 billion a year
 - State gasoline taxes
 - Automobile privilege tax
 - Driver's license fee
 - Registration fees
- Federal highway funds
 - Federal Gasoline Tax

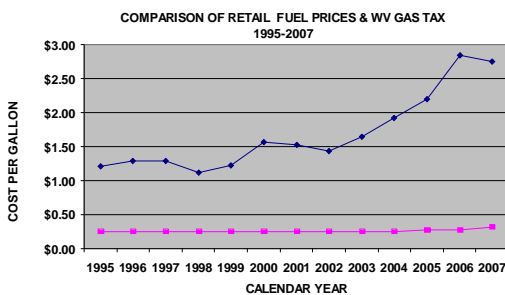
State Funding

- Gasoline tax renewal
 - Continuation of 5-cent tax (\$55M)
- Elimination of the Wholesale Freeze
 - 4.5-cent increase (+\$63M)
- Legislative Changes:
 - Elimination of certain Road Fund diversions (+\$15.5M)
 - Privilege tax exemption for new residents (-\$4.5M)
 - Consumer sales tax exemption on highway construction materials (+\$13.5M)
 - Early authorization of supplemental funds

Federal Funding

- Federal Gasoline Tax – 18.4 cents
- Sources:
 - Federal Allocation (Highway Reauthorization)
 - ARC Projects
 - Earmarks
- Transportation bill moving through Congress
 - Includes \$1 billion for nationwide bridge repair

Gasoline Prices/Taxes



Other Facts

- WV ranks 49th in capital investment per state maintained mile - \$7,594 compared to a national average of \$23,967.
- An average driver in WV uses 853 gallons of fuel annually. This generates \$269 in state fuel taxes.
- Driving on roads in need of repair costs West Virginia motorists \$292 million a year in extra vehicle repairs and operating costs – \$229 per motorist.

Funding Outlook

- State Road Fund Revenues

– Projected in millions

	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Gas Tax	\$405.8	\$380	\$375	\$375	\$375
Privilege Tax	\$168	\$166.4	\$166.3	\$166.2	\$166.1
Registration Fees	\$88.8	\$90	\$89.9	\$93	\$90.7
Miscellaneous	\$17.9	\$23.9	\$23	\$21.1	\$19.2
TOTAL	\$680.5	\$660.3	\$654.2	\$655.3	\$651

Source: W.Va. Department of Transportation

Funding Outlook

- State Road Fund Expenditures

– Projected in millions

	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Debt Service	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50
Required Set Asides	\$38.8	\$40.5	\$39.2	\$40	\$40.8
Routine Hwy. Maintenance	\$259.7	\$265.4	\$275.9	\$287	\$298.3
Administrative Support	\$64.8	\$61.5	\$62.8	\$64.2	\$65.6
State Matching Funds	\$99.2	\$94.3	\$94.3	\$94.3	\$94.3
TOTAL	\$512.5	\$511.7	\$522.2	\$535.4	\$549

Source: W.Va. Department of Transportation

Funding Outlook

- State Improvement Funds

– Projected in millions

	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Road Fund Revenues	\$680.5	\$660.3	\$654.2	\$655.3	\$651
Road Fund Expenditures	\$512.5	\$511.7	\$522.2	\$535.4	\$549
TOTAL	\$168	\$148.6	\$132	\$119.9	\$102

Source: W.Va. Department of Transportation

Transportation Outlook

- Recent comments by Secretary Mattox:

- *If West Virginia continues to rely on the existing state and federal funding sources, "nothing new will get built..."*
- *"Major new highway and bridge construction will require new revenues."*
- *West Virginia will need to find other sources of revenue in order to meet the staggering list of construction projects that communities want and need.*

Other States

- Virginia
- Pennsylvania
- North Carolina
- Maryland
- Kentucky

Other Ideas

- Local funding/taxes
 - Monongalia County Service Fee
 - SB 673
- Toll roads
- Public/private projects
- Leasing roads/highways
- GPS road use tax

Ideas, Suggestions

- Please provide comments:
 - During today's meeting
 - On provided comment sheets
 - Via a form on our website, www.keepwvmoving.org

Add Your Support

The screenshot shows the website for West Virginians for Better Transportation. At the top, there are two blue buttons: "Didn't Get a Chance to Provide Comments at Your Regional Transportation Meeting? Click Here and Give Your Thoughts" and "Need a Speaker? CLICK FOR MORE INFO". Both buttons have a "READ MORE" link. Below these is the organization's logo and contact information. A navigation menu includes "Home", "Coalitions", "Media Center", "Blog", "Resources", "Road Shows", and "Contact". A main banner features three images of road construction and the text "take an active part in preventing a transportation crisis". At the bottom, there are three columns of links: "who we are" (Mission, Coalition Partners, Coalition Events), "danger ahead" (Roads, Bridges, Highways), and "news/updates" (Regional meeting to focus on transportation needs).

Add Your Support

West Virginians for Better Transportation
P.O. Box 11830
Charleston, WV 25339-1830
(304) 345-7623 (345-ROAD)

For more information or to sign-up:
www.keepwvmoving.org

Appendix B



CITY Regional Meeting DAY, MONTH DATE, 2007, 9:30 a.m. LOCATION

Agenda

- I. Welcome
- II. Overview of W.Va.'s transportation system
 - a. Condition, present situation
 - b. Current funding levels, recent legislative changes
 - c. Impact of recent gasoline price increases
- III. Report on the WVDOH's project prioritization
 - a. State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)
 - b. \$20 billion list of projects
- IV. Discussion about the state's transportation funding outlook (2007-2012, beyond)
- V. Suggestions, ideas?

Appendix C

Please note that attendees are listed as they signed in to the meeting. Also note that those listed do not represent all attendees as some did not sign in to the meeting.

Beckley

- Patti Hamilton, West Virginia Association of Counties
- Delegate Dave Higgins
- Richard Browning, Coalfields Expressway Authority
- Tom Graham, Shawnee Parkway Authority
- John Thackston, Concord University
- Ann Worley, City of Beckley
- WD Smith, Region IV Planning & Development Council
- Pat Reed, Raleigh County Commission
- Tom Oxley, City of Oak Hill
- Delegate Linda Sumner
- Tom Cochran, Raleigh County Memorial Airport
- Josh Jones, Beaver Coal Co.
- Norm Kirkham, Connected Tech Corridor
- Dick Nevi, Greenbrier Valley Economic Development Council
- Judy Radford, 4-C Economic Development Authority
- Delegate Ricky Moye
- John Aliff, Raleigh County Commission
- Phil Lewis, Senator Rockefeller's Office
- Emmett Pugh, City of Beckley
- Libby Belcher, Region 1 Workforce Investment Board
- Charles Houck, City National Bank
- Woody Duba, Beaver Coal Co.
- Bill Baker, Jobs Foundation
- Nancy Kissinger, Chase Bank
- Doug Maddy, Southern West Virginia CVB

- Rick Johnson, West Virginia Paving
- Willie Crane, West Virginia Paving
- Bob Brunner, WOAY

Huntington

- Dick Callaway, City of St. Albans
- Scott Bias, Cabell County Commission
- Stephen Zoeller, Cabell County Commission
- Len Duetsch, Marshall University Graduate College
- Jean Hardiman, The Herald-Dispatch
- Cal Kent – Marshall University Center for Business & Economic Research;
City of Huntington
- Larry Kendall, City of Huntington
- Senator Evan Jenkins
- Charles Lanham, Route 35 Committee
- Bob Baird, Mason County Commission
- Chris Carson – Congressman Nick Rahall's Office
- Deron Runyon, Huntington-Ironton Empowerment Zone
- Delegate Carol Miller

Charleston (Complete list was not obtained)

- Congresswoman Shelley Moore Capito
- Mayor Danny Jones

Morgantown

- David Weaver, DMJM Harris
- David Bruffy, Monongalia County Transit Authority
- Wayne Spiggle, Mineral County Commission; U.S. Route 50 Association
- Bernie Fazzini, Harrison County Commission
- Scott Nale, Gannett Fleming
- Mike Neely, Gannett Fleming
- Aaron Bolyard, KCI Technologies, Inc.

- David Sharp, Potesta & Associates
- Jeremy Brooks, First United Bank & Trust
- Eric Bowen, The Dominion Post
- Al Babcock, Marion County Commission
- Jane Merandi, Congressman Alan Mollohan's Office
- Delegate Barbara Evans Fleischauer
- Cate Johnson, Congressman Alan Mollohan's Office
- Anna Rittenhouse, Congressman Alan Mollohan's Office
- Charlie Byrer, Morgantown City Council
- Mark Carter, Swanson Industries, Inc.
- Brad Allamong, Morgantown Area Chamber of Commerce
- Kathy Wagner, Harrison County Chamber of Commerce
- Duane Keener, HNTB Corp.
- John Vincent, Greenhorne & O'Mara
- Don Spencer, Morgantown City Council
- Terri Cutright, Main Street Morgantown
- Jenny Selin, Morgantown City Council
- Anthony Ford, West Virginia Local Technical Assistance Program
- Christopher Fletcher, City of Morgantown
- Chet Parsons, Greater Morgantown MPO
- Kay Murray, WAJR Radio

Martinsburg

- Preston Gooden, Berkeley County
- Jeffrey Driskill, Town of Wardensville
- Delegate John Overington
- Richard Klein, Alpha Associates, Inc.
- Mark Baldwin, City of Martinsburg
- Perry Keller, West Virginia Department of Transportation
- Delegate Craig Blair
- Delegate Walt Duke

- Robert Gordon, Hagerstown/Eastern Panhandle Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Jennifer Von Reuter, NBC 25
- Eric Meske, Bowman Consulting
- Naomi Smoot, The Journal
- David Hartley, Eastern Panhandle Home Builders Association
- Mary Jo Brown, Governor's Office
- Eileen Johnson, City of Romney
- Chris Strovel, Congresswoman Shelley Moore Capito's Office
- Ted Bostic, Essroc Cement
- Bill Stubblefield, Berkeley County Commission
- Ross Curtis, Citizen

Wheeling

- Don Mason, Wetzel County Commission
- Bob Gorby, Wetzel County Commission
- Larry Travis, AAA
- Dave Knuth, Marshall County Chamber of Commerce
- Tony Chieffalo, Route 2/I-68 Authority
- Tom Hvisdos, Ohio Valley Regional Transportation Authority
- Rakesh Sharma, Belomar Regional Council
- Robert Herron, City of Wheeling
- Nate Fluharty, WTRF
- Mark Sikora, HDR Engineering, Inc.
- Delegate Jack Yost
- Delegate Tal Hutchins
- Martha Carra, West Virginia Division of Rehab Services
- Fred Connors, Wheeling News Register/Intelligencer

Appendix D

West Virginia faces growing highway crisis

Bill Billeter

Register-Herald Reporter, Sept. 6, 2007

Joe Deneault is an articulate and thoughtful man whose mission is to deliver a troubling message to as many West Virginians as possible.

Speaking Wednesday in Beckley to a group of community and government leaders, Deneault conveyed the bad news:

West Virginia's roads and bridges are crumbling. The cost of repairing them keeps soaring, while the revenue to repair them keeps shrinking. Highway projects, severely needed all over the state, are decades away from being funded.

And no one is seriously taking a look at what needs to be done to correct the growing crisis, Deneault said.

Deneault is the chairman of West Virginians for Better Transportation, an organization that seeks to inform state residents and leaders of the crisis.

"Nearly half, 46 percent, of the bridges in the state's interstate system will need significant repairs by the year 2026," Deneault said. "Funds aren't available and won't be available from the federal government."

"Twenty-seven percent of West Virginia's major roads are in poor or mediocre condition," he said.

This statistic matters, Deneault explained, because the condition of the roads is an indicator of their safety.

"West Virginia's highway fatality rate is 50 percent above the national average," he said. "The national fatality rate is dropping, and ours is up 9 percent."

"West Virginia will need to add additional lanes along 142 miles of its existing 555-mile interstate system by the year 2026 in order to relieve growing traffic congestion," Deneault said. "The money is not there to do this."

The problem, of course, is money — billions of dollars needed over the next several years. The state has a list of 170 proposed future transportation projects. The estimated total cost is \$20 billion. With current funding levels, Deneault said, the state will complete only 8 percent of these projects in the next 24 years.

"Parts of the state have very important projects that will never be considered because the funding is not there," he said. "We can't wait 24 years."

While government leaders at Wednesday's meeting agreed the state's roads face a crisis, there was little agreement about how to raise the billions of dollars needed.

All options Deneault offered for raising the money would cost state residents in taxes, tolls or fees.

Deneault admits generating the revenue will be “painful,” and believes state politicians will shy away from action until the people of West Virginia demand the roads are fixed.

But most government leaders at the meeting had not received such a mandate from their constituents, and voiced concerns about raising taxes.

“How do we justify to our constituents, who have paid and paid and paid, that this is the way to go?” Delegate Linda Sumner, R-Raleigh, asked. “To think that raising fees and taxes is an innovative way of thinking — we’ve been doing that for years.”

Several community leaders from southern West Virginia expressed concern that southern counties had not received their fair share of highway projects.

Residents in southern West Virginia will resist paying taxes to pay for projects in other parts of the state, said Bill Baker, chairman of the Beckley-Raleigh County Transportation Authority.

“You’ve got to show people in southern West Virginia that you care about their projects and concerns before you get their support,” he said.

Deneault explained that community leaders throughout the state have their individual concerns about how to tackle the problem. He urged leaders in Beckley to assist in developing a solution to the crisis that affects all West Virginians.

“The reality is that it affects everybody,” he said. “If we are going to keep our children here in West Virginia, we have got to have good jobs that can provide them a standard of living. We think transportation is part of that.”

— E-mail: [bbilleter @register-herald.com](mailto:bbilleter@register-herald.com)

Editorial: How bad do we want it?

The Register-Herald, Sept. 6, 2007

The first of seven regional meetings being held throughout the state to bring the public’s attention to highway issues in West Virginia was conducted Wednesday in Beckley.

We appreciate the efforts of the West Virginians for Better Transportation and its co-sponsors, the state Municipal League and Association of Counties. What they are doing is vitally important, educating the public on the dire need to repair, replace, upgrade and add to our road and bridge system.

And while maybe it’s just a coincidence, we find it interesting that our region should be chosen as the first stop for such an event.

Might it be that the rest of the state knows how deprived we have been for new road development compared to the amount of taxes being extracted from our area?

Could the fact that we have to pay tolls to travel on our interstate highways, unlike any other part of the state, be part of the reasoning for seeking our support?

Or is it the worry it may be tougher to sell us on higher taxes for better roads and bridges?

Maybe none of the aforementioned items has anything to do with it as far as they are concerned — but it has everything to do with it for southern West Virginia.

If West Virginia is really going to be “Open for Business,” concrete and asphalt roads are just as important, if not more so, than the information and technology highway we frequently hear about from Charleston.

We still want what is due to us, quality access, i.e., the Beckley Z-Way, Coalfields Expressway, King Coal Highway, so we can move our economy forward.

Make a commitment to southern West Virginia in the form of these roads and then we'll make a commitment to supporting the revenue streams needed to get things done.

The time has come to say fair's fair.

W.Va. facing highway challenges

By [Jean Tarbett Hardiman](#)

The Herald-Dispatch, September 20, 2007

HUNTINGTON -- It affects people getting to their jobs, students getting to school, and goods coming into and leaving the state.

The economy, education, tourism and simply quality of life are all affected by West Virginia's transportation system, and there's a group that's traveling the state to raise awareness about challenges in improving transportation statewide.

West Virginians for Better Transportation (WVBT) stopped at the Rahall Transportation Institute in Huntington on Wednesday. It was the second of seven scheduled stops it's making this fall to share information about where West Virginia's transportation system stands and the hurdles it must overcome to improve.

The group also is gathering feedback from government officials and leaders in those areas, feedback which members will consider presenting as solutions to the state Department of Transportation.

With soaring gas prices, roads in particular are an issue for many West Virginians, said WVBT Chairman Joe Deneault.

According to Deneault -- who is retired from the state Department of Transportation after more than 30 years of service -- the Division of Highways recently reported that it needs \$350 million more per year to keep up with statewide demand for highway construction and maintenance. And the list of 170 transportation projects surpasses \$20 billion in costs, in today's dollars, he said.

Deneault said only 8 percent of those projects will be funded in the next 24 years.

"If those projects are truly needed -- and that should be part of the discussion -- then that is unacceptable," he said.

Some other statistics he presented:

- 37 percent of West Virginia bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete.
- About 46 percent of the bridges on the state's highway system and 63 percent of the state's interstate system will need significant repairs by the year 2026.
- 27 percent of West Virginia's major roads are in poor or mediocre condition.
- West Virginia leads the country in the percentage of narrow lanes -- 67 percent are less than 10 feet wide.
- Vehicle travel is expected to increase 40 percent by 2025, and 67 percent on the interstates by 2026.
- Miles of roads paved in the state have dropped by 50 percent during the past five years.
- West Virginia's highway fatality rate is increasing while nationally it's decreasing. The state's rate is 50 percent above the national rate.

The state's current road fund comes from state gasoline tax, which is 31 cents per gallon, the automobile privilege tax and driver's license and registration fees. Federal funds come, but usually require a match, Deneault said.

The troubling thing is that while expenses are increasing, the Department of Transportation projects that state road fund revenues will decrease from \$680 million next year to \$651 million by 2012.

Bottom line: "In any given year, you could only build 16 miles of new road a year, and that's if you do nothing else," Deneault said.

So the state needs new sources of revenue, and this is where local officials were asked for their suggestions.

Huntington City Councilman Cal Kent said the solution should not be based on the gas tax "because it's a dinosaur."

Another problem is that with gas prices, motorists are continually searching for ways to use less of it, he said. "At best, it would be a short-term solution to a long-term problem."

He also suggested that the state constitution be changed so that cities and counties are less restricted on what they can do to cope with the issue.

"Even the user-fee approach wouldn't work until we have more taxing authority at the local level," Kent said.

Deneault provided an example of a potential solution in Virginia. The state has created two regional authorities and allowed residents to vote on additional taxes that would go toward roads in their particular region.

"The lesson from that is: People are willing to pay for road improvements, as long as they know it's going to their area," he said.

Among other ideas are a service fee, proposed in Monongalia County, or increasing toll roads. As it is, 85 percent of the state's tolls are paid by out-of-state residents, Deneault said.

Sen. Evan Jenkins, D-Cabell, suggested that local leaders take it upon themselves to get ideas from local residents to prioritize the needs of their own area. The way things work now, people feel like they have little input into the DOH system, he said.

"We have to step up to the plate locally ... to build confidence in the public," he said. "We have to approach this problem in a very different way than we have in the past."

Forum: Roads need \$; State officials call for added funding sources

By Eric Bowen

The Dominion Post, Oct. 21, 2007

As local officials look toward a February vote on a \$2-a-week service fee to pay for new and improved roads in Morgantown, state leaders are calling for new ways to fund highway projects.

Joe Deneault, chairman of West Virginians for Better Transportation, said the state of transportation funding in West Virginia has reached a "crisis." State leaders will have to prepare for the day when new revenues will have to be generated or services severely scaled back.

"You haven't seen ... the roads falling apart or bridges falling down, but we believe that's just a matter of time," Deneault said.

West Virginians for Better Roads hosted a transportation forum recently at the Waterfront Place Hotel in Morgantown. It was the fourth of seven forums being held around the state to raise awareness of the problem of transportation funding in the state.

West Virginia has about \$1 billion every year to spend on road projects, Deneault said, of which half comes from the federal government and the rest from state sources. But the state Division of Highways estimates that the 170 projects currently on the drawing board would cost \$20 billion to fund.

Deneault said that funding for roads is projected to decline in the next five years, while costs for construction and maintenance go up. And he said that the use of roads will continue to increase, causing more need for maintenance and construction of roadways.

Deneault offered a variety of ways to increase revenues. He said ideas such as higher gasoline taxes, toll roads and service fees such as the \$2 road fee proposed in Monongalia County all have merit.

But he said his organization doesn't advocate for any specific proposals. He said that it's up to the legislators and citizens to decide what is the best way to deal with the problem.

"What we think is important is that there be a debate, and that won't happen until people believe there is a problem," Deneault said. "Either you get less, or you find a way to generate more resources."

Chet Parsons, director of the Greater Morgantown Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization, said that the issues of transportation funding presented at the forum are very familiar.

The MPO dealt with similar issues in its recent 25-year transportation plan that showed that state funding will not be readily available to deal with the county's transportation woes.

The MPO and County Commission have proposed a \$2 weekly service fee to pay for roads within the county. The fee will come up for a vote Feb. 2.

Parsons said that many of the possible solutions for transportation funding have been talked about locally, and he is glad to see a statewide organization letting people know about funding problems.

“In terms of education, they can talk as much as they want to,” Parsons said.

Morgantown City Council member Jenny Selin said she wanted to ensure that state and federal representatives would support Morgantown if voters accept the \$2 fee.

Selin said that like many people, she fears that the state government will see that Monongalia County is paying for its own roads and cut back on the county’s share of the road funding.

“I would hope the federal government would notice that if we’re trying to help ourselves,” Selin said, “they would kick in some matching monies.”

Rep. Alan Mollohan, D-W.Va., offered his own views on the transportation funding at the forum. He said that he recognized that funding for roads and other transportation is becoming more precarious, both at the state and federal levels.

Mollohan hesitated to talk about raising taxes to pay for roads, but he said that without new resources, it’s going to be hard to meet the needs for transportation in the future.

Mollohan said that funding transportation comes down to deciding what priorities to pay for, given the limited funding available. He said that lawmakers should give precedence to those projects that promote economic development and diversification.

Though he said that while he does represent northern West Virginia, the local area should get more funding. He said that Morgantown and the technology corridor should get support because they offer the greatest potential for economic diversification.

“Morgantown is a virtual wellspring for economic diversification,” Mollohan said. “WVU is increasingly becoming a sophisticated research institution and ... is one of the best places in a technology economy to derive that diversification.

OTHER FORUMS sponsored by West Virginians for Better Transportation are scheduled for Tuesday in Martinsburg, Oct. 30 in Bluefield and Nov. 14 in Wheeling. Info: wvbt.org.

Needed: Funding strategy for roads

State forecasts 39 percent drop in improvement money in next 5 years

By Bill Byrd

Times West Virginian, Oct. 16, 2007

MORGANTOWN — Citing an estimated 39 percent drop over the next five years for West Virginia’s fund for new roads, bridges and other transportation improvements, Joseph T. Deneault, the chairman of a

transportation coalition, said the state needs a long-term funding strategy.

The state Transportation Department estimates its improvement fund will shrink from \$168 million this fiscal year to \$102 million in 2012, a 39 percent drop, said Deneault.

“We used to say it took \$1 million a mile to build a new stretch of highway. Today, it’s closer to \$10 million-a-mile,” he said.

Balanced against the needs of various communities around the state — the state DOT has a long-term list amounting to \$20 billion in projects — the funding shortfall is serious, Deneault said. A former State Highway Engineer, he is the chairman of “West Virginians for Better Transportation” (WVBT).

The group is trying to build support for a long-term funding plan. The state DOT estimates the current annual shortfall is about \$350 million.

Deneault praised state lawmakers for taking steps to strengthen the state’s general road fund earlier this year by about \$142 million.

The costs of the Highway Courtesy Patrol, State Police highway enforcement and vehicle weight regulators were moved out of the road fund by House Bill 2877 (HB 2877). The move added about \$15.5 million to the road fund.

While contractors will continue to pay a six percent sales tax on materials used in highway construction and road maintenance, the taxes collected will be re-directed to the road fund. The measure (SB 690) adds about \$13.5 million to the fund.

The Legislature continued a nickel-a-gallon tax on retail gasoline sales until August 2013. The measure generates about \$55 million annually for the fund.

And Gov. Joe Manchin lifted a freeze on the 4.5 cent wholesale tax increase. The move will add about \$63 million this year to the road fund.

Deneault noted that for the first time since 1933, the state Legislature has empowered counties to construct roads, water treatment plants, storm water and sewage facilities.

He and U.S. Rep. Alan B. Mollohan, the other featured speaker at a public meeting here Monday, said the County Infrastructure Improvement Bill (SB 673 passed in March 2006) is an option for growing communities such as Morgantown.

The bill allows counties to impose a countywide service fee. The fees are used to pay revenue bonds for specific infrastructure projects. The measure must be submitted to voters for their approval in a referendum.

Mon County is preparing such a bond proposal for voter approval in February.

In a summary of the “county option” bill while it was being considered by lawmakers, Michael Garrison, now West Virginia University president, wrote that traditional state sources of funds for new roads may not be enough to build new roads for economic development.

The state’s use of motor fuel taxes, the vehicle title privilege tax and registration fees, “and turnpike fees collectively fund more miles of state-maintained roads (determined on a per capita basis) than any of the other 49 states,” Garrison wrote.

Garrison's summary was part of a package of materials handed out at Monday's forum here. The meeting was sponsored by WVBT.

Deneault and U.S. Rep. Alan B. Mollohan were the featured speakers.

Mollohan stressed planning in his remarks. He said state residents need to understand both the process and priorities that drive how their highway tax dollars are spent.

Competition for federal and state highway funds means new roads and bridges must be carefully planned, he said.

"The best plans win," he said. Supporters must take the time to ensure that their communities realize all of the challenges of paying for new roads and bridges, he stressed.

The projects that actually solve local transportation problems and push economic development and diversification stand the best chance of being funded and built, he said.

"We're going to build roads in West Virginia. We're just not going to build \$20 billion worth," he said Monday, citing the long-term list of new projects put out by the state Transportation Department.

Because of its growth centered in Morgantown, "North Central West Virginia is the best area for your buck" in terms of improving transportation, he said.

Agency: Traffic crisis looming

A statewide transportation group says road problems must be addressed soon

The Journal, October 24, 2007

MARTINSBURG — West Virginia's traffic woes could be tomorrow's nightmare if action is not taken soon, according to a statewide educational coalition that was in town this week as part of a transportation discussion.

West Virginians for Better Transportation representative Joseph Deneault said 37 percent of West Virginia's bridges are considered structurally deficient or functionally obsolete, and 27 percent of the state's major highways and roads are considered in poor to mediocre condition.

"If we continue down the path we're on right now, we're going to be in a crisis," said Deneault, whose organization was in Martinsburg this week to hold the fifth of seven regional transportation education sessions. Previous events were held in Beckley, Huntington and Charleston, and additional meetings are scheduled to follow in Bluefield and Wheeling.

The message at all the meetings has been the same: West Virginia's infrastructure is nearing a meltdown and the problems could continue to worsen if left unchecked.

The group projects that traffic on West Virginia's highways will increase by 40 percent by 2025, while the number of miles that the West Virginia Department of Transportation is able to repave could drop by nearly half.

A major part of the problem is funding, Deneault said. Highway projects are financed primarily through the state's gas tax, but as the price of fuel has increased, some drivers have cut back on the number of miles they are traveling. Compounding the problem is the rising cost of construction materials.

These and other factors make figuring out which of the department's 170 projects should receive funding difficult.

"The bottom line is, all these projects are important to somebody," Deneault told city, county and state officials during the morning meeting.

The \$1 billion in revenues that the Department of Transportation receives is simply not enough money to finance an estimated \$20 billion worth of infrastructure projects, he said.

West Virginia is looking at ways to solve this problem.

In 2006, state legislators approved the County Infrastructure Improvement Bill. The measure enables rapidly growing counties to finance roads, water treatment facilities and wastewater treatment facilities through local fees. Such fees must be proposed by a county commission and then go before voters for a referendum.

Deneault said it is likely that Morgantown will be the first to use this new tool by enacting a fee for workers who use the city's roads. Still, more is needed, he said.

Deneault said other states, including Pennsylvania, are eyeing tolls as a part of the solution. Public-private partnerships are also a possibility, along with leases on roads.

While some in attendance at Tuesday's gathering said they supported the prospect of tolls on roadways such as Interstate 81, Delegate Craig Blair, R-Berkeley, questioned such a move, saying motorists would simply opt to use other roads.

Blair said the state needs to reconsider a current prevailing wage requirement. This, he said, could save West Virginia as much as 30 percent on labor. But Deneault said labor accounts for only about a quarter of a project's total cost.

A solution to the state's transportation woes, he said, will require more than just the elimination of the prevailing wage. A multifaceted approach will likely be the only remedy, he said.

W.Va. Road Woes Topic of WVBT Presentation

By Fred Connors

The Intelligencer/Wheeling News-Register, Nov. 15, 2007

WHEELING – The state of West Virginia's transportation infrastructure was discussed Wednesday at WesBanco Arena.

Local officials heard a presentation by the West Virginians for Better Transportation. WVBT Chairman Joe Deneault talked about state road and bridge problems. Wednesday's meeting was the final of seven held around the state to raise awareness of challenges facing elected officials and community leaders.

“There are more needs facing our state’s transportation system than can be met with existing and projected resources,” Deneault said. “Local communities all across the state are struggling with the impacts of this situation. Many communities are going to face greater problems and issues as limited state road fund dollars are stretched even further.”

He said the information sessions were held to gather information and define problems so a statewide assessment can be made. “we want the transportation issues to become known to the public and, then, we can look at how to solve some of them,” he said. Attending the meeting were West Virginia Delegates Jack Yost, D-Brooke, and Tal Hutchins, D-Ohio, Wetzel County Commissioners Don Mason and Bob Gorby, Martha Carra of the West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services, Marshall County Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Dave Knuth, Tony Chieffalo of the W.Va. 2/Interstate 68 Authority, Ohio Valley Regional Transit Authority Executive Director Tom Hvisdos, Bel-O-Mar Senior Transportation Planner Rakesh Sharma, Wheeling City Manager Robert Herron, Mark Sikora of HDR Engineering Inc. and AAA Regional President Larry Travis.

Deneault said, “Local leaders and the public must fully understand the challenges facing the state and decide whether the current situation is acceptable or whether they are willing to work toward a long-term plan with adequate funding.”

He presented several facts:

- 27 percent of West Virginia’s major roads are in poor or mediocre condition.
- 37 percent of the state bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete.
- At 2.26 per 100 million vehicle miles, West Virginia’s traffic fatality rate on non-interstate roads is nearly 50 percent higher than the national average.
- Travel on West Virginia’s interstate highways is expected to increase by 67 percent by the year 2026.

Deneault said WVBT is spearheading a statewide education campaign, “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.