

DRIVING AHEAD

VOLUME 3/ISSUE 1

A bi-monthly newsletter of the
American Highway Users Alliance

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FEDERAL FRONT

Victory on 2007 Highway Funding....

On January 30, Congress agreed to fund \$39.1 billion in new highway obligations for fiscal year 2007 - the amount guaranteed in SAFETEA-LU. An all-out Highway Users lobbying effort bolstered by thousands of emails, letters, and phone calls from our members and allies was instrumental in reversing a plan by some appropriators to cut \$3.4 billion out of the program. Seventy-two senators responded to calls and emails. They signed a letter organized by Senators Thune (R-SD) and Baucus (D-MT) to Senate leaders demanding full funding. Other Senate champions were EPW Committee Chairman Boxer (D-CA) and Ranking Member Inhofe (R-OK) and Sen. Kit Bond (R-MO). In the House, T&I Chairmen Oberstar (D-MN) and Ranking Member Mica (R-FL) convinced all 75 of their Members to sign a letter to appropriators demanding full funding for the highway program.

... But A New Fight Is On for 2008

Less than a week after we declared victory on 2007 highway funding, the Bush Administration proposed eliminating \$631 million in guaranteed funds for fiscal year 2008 highway programs. The Highway Users immediately reacted by issuing a press release expressing disappointment with the President's budget. The \$631 million in "Revenue-Aligned Budget Authority" (RABA) is a mandatory increase in spending, guaranteed under the terms of the 2005 SAFETEA-LU highway authorization law. Over the course of the year, we will work to achieve the fully guaranteed \$40.2 billion for fiscal year 2008, while persuading appropriators to eliminate unauthorized spending to keep the Highway Trust Fund solvent through 2009. ■



South Dakota Senator
John Thune (R)



Montana Senator
Max Baucus (D)

Looking Back — 75 Years of Advocacy, Progress

As the Highway Users marks its 75th Anniversary this year, we are taking a trip back in time to look at Historical Milestones since 1932, the year we were founded by General Motors President Alfred P. Sloan, Jr. and other industry leaders.

In 1932 Congress passed the Emergency Relief and Construction Act, appropriating \$120 million to the states for highway funding. Two years later Congress passed the Hayden-Cartwright Action, providing emergency funding for urban and secondary farm-to-market roads, abolishing limits on federal funding per mile of road, and

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75th Anniversary
1932 - 2007

• **Americans for a Strong National Highway Network Coalition Examines Road Leasing**

On February 9 at the National Press Club, Greg Cohen spoke at a press conference along with Governor Bill Graves, ATA; Jill Ingrassia, AAA; Todd Spencer, OOIDA; and Lisa Mullings, NATSO as members of the coalition, Americans for a Strong National Highway Network. The group expressed concerns about recent and proposed long-term leases of toll roads, stressed the importance of maintaining connectivity of public roads, evaluating public-private partnerships (PPP's) on a case by case basis, and making sure that the deals are transparent and accountable to the public. The Policy and Government Affairs Committee will convene on March 9 to formulate principles on PPPs. If you would like to join the Committee and have input on this vital issue, please contact daisysingh@highways.org.

The Policy and Government Affairs Committee will convene on March 9 to formulate principles on public-private partnerships.

cuts. T&I Ranking Member John Mica (R-FL) spoke forcefully about reauthorizing the next highway bill on time, and ensuring that there are no delays, such as there were from 2003 through 2005. The Committee set forth an ambitious agenda including protecting full funding levels for highways

• **Lawmakers Gear Up for the Next Highway Bill**

The Highway Users policy staff attended the first Highways & Transit Subcommittee hearing of the 110th Congress on January 24. The hearing focused on challenges facing the surface transportation system but had the makings of an unofficial first hearing on SAFETEA-LU reauthorization. Highways & Transit Chairman Peter DeFazio (D-OR) and Ranking Member Jimmy Duncan (R-TN) discussed the need for robust, on-time passage of a highway reauthorization bill. For copies of the testimony of the witnesses, please contact stevewiener@highways.org.

and rigorous oversight of the Department of Transportation. Separately, Cohen attended a meet-and-greet breakfast on January 9 with House T&I Chairman Jim Oberstar (D-MN) and the new Committee members at the Democratic National Club in Washington, DC. The meeting gave The Highway Users an opportunity to chat with the new lawmakers. Special thanks to Ashland's Mike Toohey, Highway Users Chairman Emeritus, for purchasing our tickets to the Oberstar breakfast.

• **FHWA's Administrator Discusses 2007 Agenda**

On January 4th, we met with Federal Highway Administrator Rick Capka and two of his key staffers to compare and contrast The Highway Users' agenda for 2007 and FHWA's agenda. Specifically, The Highway Users supports FHWA's efforts to promote solutions to traffic congestion and streamline regulatory burdens. We asked the Administrator if he would look into developing another round of major highway projects for inclusion in the streamlining Executive Order. We also expressed appreciation for FHWA's collaboration with the Roadway Safety Foundation on safety issues. We expressed concern with the Administration's uncritical promotion of road leasing transactions. Looking toward the 2009 reauthorization, we urged the Administration to focus on national mobility needs and economic growth before developing a funding plan. ■

• **Meeting with Transportation Leaders on the Hill**

On January 17, The Highway Users attended the first House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee's Organizational Meeting where Chairman Jim Oberstar took the gavel. Oberstar urged the Committee to join him to fight any potential highway funding



HIGHWAYS *IN ACTION*

- **Highway Trust Fund Shortfalls Discussed**

– The Highway Users attended a Road Gang meeting on February 8 featuring FHWA Administrator Rick Capka. He spoke about the difficulties that the state and federal governments will experience in the coming years in regards to transportation funding and options that need to be considered to counter budget shortfalls. We explained our objections to the Administration's proposal to eliminate \$631 million in RABA funds for FY 2008 and noted that the President's budget proposed funding National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) vehicle safety programs out of the Highway Trust Fund, instead of the General Fund. Correcting this would save the Highway Trust Fund \$230 million by the end of 2009.

- **The Federal Perspective: Briefing Highway Users Members on the Road**

– On January 31, President & CEO Greg Cohen addressed the American Concrete Pavement Association's Pennsylvania chapter on the



on motorcycle safety. The focus of the meeting was the feasibility of an NHTSA-produced national model for motorcycle drivers' education standards. Other groups attending included the U.S. Department of Transportation, American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators, safety advocates, and motorcyclists groups. The Highway Users supports efforts to reduce

motorcyclist fatalities, and lobbied for a riders' crash causation study included in SAFETEA-LU.

- **Railroad Trust Fund Concept Weighed**

President Greg Cohen attended the annual meeting of the Transportation Research Foundation on January 23, which featured a keynote address by Chip Nottingham, the Chairman of Surface Transportation Board (STB). Although the STB is purely a freight regulatory agency, Nottingham has extensive experience in DOT policy. Cohen asked about the positives and negatives of

creating a Railroad Trust Fund that would address captive shippers' concerns about the need for new rail capacity. Nottingham expressed interest in the idea, and suggested it merited further discussion. Several highway users members are also railroad shippers. UPS and Portland

Cement Association have testified before Congress about the perils of being a "captive shipper" to railroad companies, experiencing price spikes, service delays, and poor transport reliability.

- **Supporting Projects of National Significance**

On January 9, we attended a town hall meeting with Maryland Governor-elect Martin O'Malley (D) and incoming Maryland Department of Transportation Secretary John Porcari to discuss a variety of issues, including the Intercounty Connector highway project between I-95 and I-270. O'Malley held firm against anti-road activists in attendance and re-stated his support for the desperately needed highway. ■

Cohen noted that despite full funding guarantees by lawmakers for fiscal year 2007, highway funding still faces future attacks due to the dropping cash balance in the Highway Trust Fund.

federal perspective of the most pressing challenges facing the highway community. Cohen noted that despite full funding guarantees by lawmakers for fiscal year 2007, highway funding still faces future attacks due to the dropping cash balance in the Highway Trust Fund. Most importantly, he emphasized the significance of a well-defined national mission to bolster the highway program. If you would like a copy of the speech, please email daisysingh@highways.org.

- **Motorcycle Drivers Education Standards Formulated**

– On January 25, The Highway Users joined our members, the American Motorcyclist Association and Motorcycle Riders Foundation, to engage in a dialog with National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) staff and other stakeholders

Highway Users Membership Update

The new year began well with two new members joining The Highway Users: ACPA Pennsylvania Chapter, a State Advocate Member, and Clancy Jayne Consulting, an Affiliate Member of the Arizona Highway Users Conference. Welcome and thanks for your support.

2007 Highway Users Action Plan Unveiled

Enclosed with this copy of *Driving Ahead* is The Highway Users' Action Plan, *Let's Get Moving Again*, the legislative agenda and priorities for the year. There is a special message from DOT Secretary Norman Mineta (2001-2006). Top

action items include redefining the national mission of the federal highway program, monitoring implementation of the current SAFETEA-LU highway bill, improving roadway safety, and preventing diversion of highway user fees, among others. ■



Highway Users Intern Steve Wiener and Office Manager Lokia Bailey work the booth at the ITS Technology Fair on Capitol Hill on February 14.

2007 National Roadway Safety Awards Competition Opens March 1



The biennial National Roadway Safety Awards competition, co-sponsored by the Roadway Safety Foundation and the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), has officially opened. Applications for the 2007 awards program will be accepted through June 1, 2007.

The competition will recognize outstanding safety achievements using Federal-aid Highway, Federal Highway Safety Program (Section 402), State and/or Local and Private Sector funds. FHWA stresses the importance of a strategic, data-driven approach to safety that reduces crashes related to the highest number of fatalities involving roadway departures, intersections and pedestrians.

Entries should be in one of the three program categories: infrastructure improvements; operational improvements; or program, planning, development and evaluation.

Results will be announced in the fall of 2007. Honorees will receive national recognition and media coverage, in addition to an award presented in Washington, DC by FHWA and RSF officials. This year, winning entries also will be featured in a Best Practices Guide as well as in other media.

For award guidelines, criteria and application materials, visit www.roadwaysafetyawards.org. Questions should be directed to the FHWA Office of Safety at 202.366.2288. ■

WHAT'S AHEAD

Upcoming Board Meeting

June 26, 2007

Annual Meeting & Forum

On the Highway Trust Fund

October 1-3, 2007

Save the Date!



The American Highway Users Alliance is the broadest-based transportation coalition in Washington, DC, focused exclusively on promoting highway system performance, roadway safety improvements and freedom of mobility.

Looking Back, 75 Years ...

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declaring congressional policy against diversion of highway funds to non-highway purposes. In 1937, the Automotive Safety Foundation (ASF – predecessor of the Roadway Safety Foundation) was created by automobile and allied industries to coordinate highway safety activities and place the industry effort on a permanent basis. That same year, President Franklin Roosevelt ordered a feasibility study of major cross-country highways. ■