

DRIVING AHEAD

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Official newsletter of the
American Highway Users Alliance

2010 OFFICERS

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Congratulations to our newly
elected Officers. A full listing of
2010 Executive Committee and
Board of Directors will be included
in the next issue of *Driving Ahead*.



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FEDERAL FRONT

Highway, Jobs, and Climate Change Bills Will Return In 2010

With healthcare reform currently dominating the Senate's calendar, it looks very unlikely that Congress will pass a highway authorization bill of any length, the controversial 40-year climate change bill, or a newly floated "jobs" bill before the end of 2009. However, we are becoming increasingly optimistic that some form of job-creating highway and bridge bill short of a complete authorization could be developed with bipartisan support in early 2010.

While the Obama Administration and Congressional tax writing committees remain uninterested in the near-term for new user fee revenue for a long-term highway bill, there has been increased chatter among Administration officials and legislators for the development of a new jobs bill that would likely involve a boost in highway and bridge spending over two years from bonds or the general fund of the Treasury.

The Highway Users strongly supports a dominant inclusion of highway and bridge investments in any jobs bill. In media interviews and lobbying visits we consistently remind audiences that the highway portion of the 2009 stimulus bill has been its greatest success story and that the lesson for Congress is that far more of that bill should have been devoted to highway and mobility investments.

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Unfortunately, there has been no significant forward motion on the highway authorization bill since its expiration on September 30th. Although the House has passed a three-month extension of the bill, the Senate has been unable to schedule enough floor time to overrule objections from Senators Gregg (R-NH), Coburn (R-OK), and DeMint (R-SC) to get its six-month extension plan considered.

Unlike the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee, which marked up a draft six-year bill in Subcommittee, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee has made little progress in writing a bill, in part because the climate change issue was considered a higher priority for Chairman Boxer (D-CA). Beyond the climate bill, Boxer and Ranking Member Inhofe (R-OK) have been focused on overcoming objections to an extension and that has further kept their attention away from writing a long-term six-year

continued on page 2



Concerns Remain Over Cap-and-Trade Bill

The Highway Users and allied groups met with Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee staff from both sides of the aisle to discuss ongoing concerns about the cap-and-trade bill’s transportation planning requirements. The problematic provision adds new and ambiguous statewide and metropolitan transportation planning requirements to an already long and difficult process. New federal controls over planning have raised the concerns of many highway supporters and state transportation agencies. We also joined the American Trucking Associations and others in expressing deep concerns with the fuel price increases contemplated in the climate bill. According to a new analysis from Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX) and the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee minority office, the bill would cost fuel users \$3.6 trillion over forty years, yet none of the new revenue would be deposited in the Highway Trust Fund nor spent on highway projects. ■

Promoting Safety for High Risk Rural Roads

Highway Users staff joined the Roadway Infrastructure Safety Coalition (RISC) to meet with staff from multiple Senate offices to discuss preserving and growing the high risk rural road safety program. We are looking for Senators willing to endorse and sponsor a bill. The Coalition bill is compatible with Highway Users safety priorities developed by the Safety Taskforce of our Planning & Government Affairs Committee. Specifically, the bill contains \$1 billion for high risk rural roads in the next federal highway bill. In the House, we have secured support from Rep. Mike Arcuri (D-NY) who is working with House Transportation & Infrastructure (T&I) Committee Chairman Jim Oberstar (D-MN) to get support for our priorities as an amendment to the House transportation authorization bill. ■

Highway, Jobs, and Climate Change... cont. from page 1

authorization bill. In mid-November, we were pleased that Boxer announced her staff would start writing the long-term bill without further delay.

Unfortunately, allowing the highway bill to lapse without reauthorization or extension has led to significant cuts in highway programs since October 1st. Through short-term “continuing resolutions” Congress has ensured that states continue receiving some money, but it is about \$1 billion

less per month than last year. These cuts can be restored if and when Congress passes a SAFETEA-LU extension. This too may wait until 2010.

The Highway Users has been staunchly opposed to the current funding cuts, arguing that the public is being duped when Congress provides stimulus money for highways in the beginning of the year but then cuts traditional funding at the end of the year. These short-sighted decisions will lead to safety and congestion problems that degrade quality-of-life.

Ultimately, going into 2010, we remain focused on a strong, long-term solution that prioritizes programs that benefit highway users. We continue to work toward a six-year bill that provides a major increase in current funding to address our crumbling, unsafe, and congested roads and bridges. ■

2009 National Roadway Safety Awards



The Federal Highway Administration and the Roadway Safety Foundation, chartered by The Highway Users, conducted the 2009 National Roadway Safety Awards on November 5th on Capitol Hill. The event featured a keynote address from U.S. DOT Secretary Ray LaHood who praised the award winners for their innovative, lifesaving projects. Pictured from left to right are: DOT Secretary Ray LaHood; Gary Modi, P.E., Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, Bureau of Highway Safety and Engineering; and Roadway Safety Foundation Executive Director Greg Cohen. The Pennsylvania project was entitled “Strategies to Reduce Alcohol-Related Crashes and Fatalities in Pennsylvania.”

INSIDE HIGHWAY USERS



Highway Users Chairman Gov. Bill Graves, of the American Trucking Associations, addressed attendees at the 2009 Highway Users Annual Meeting while Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Chief Victor Mendez listened. Administrator Mendez spoke about current transportation priorities of the Obama Administration.

Photos courtesy of Connie Heiss, American Trucking Associations

Following The Highway Users Annual Meeting, there were two Policy Panels. The first panel focused on highway authorization bill progress and featured key transportation Hill speakers. Jack Basso of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials moderated the panel. Pictured below from left to right is: Jack Basso, AASHTO; Kathy Dedrick, Senate Environment & Public Works Committee; Rachel Milberg, Senate Appropriations; and David Napoliello, House Appropriations.

FHWA Administrator Victor Mendez delivered the keynote address during the luncheon at the meeting held at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, DC on October 20th.



Honorary Chairman Norman Mineta (former USDOT Secretary) introduced the second Policy Panel entitled "Environment & Energy Hot Issues." Pictured from left to right: Secy. Norman Mineta; Highway Users President & CEO Greg Cohen; Cindy Burbank, Parsons Brinckerhoff; Alan Pisarski, independent transportation expert; and Debra Marshall, Chevron.

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. The Highway Users was founded in 1932 as a not-for-profit organization.



State Highway Users Conferences Honored as “Advocates in Action”

The Oklahoma Highway Users Federation, which was founded in 1937, received a check for \$500 as our first “Advocates in Action” honoree for outstanding work galvanizing action within the state and lobbying for maximum funding of highways in the budget of the state’s department of transportation. Ongoing communications efforts by OKHUF Secretary-Treasurer Chuck Mai alerted members of legislative developments. The aggressive OKHUF members contributed to the outcome: the state DOT preserved most of its highway budget and received much-needed stimulus funding. During The Highway Users Annual Meeting on October 20th, Chairman Gov. Bill Graves of the American Trucking Associations praised the OKHUF for its exemplary grassroots advocacy that resulted in positive outcomes for Oklahoma highway users.



Photo courtesy of Ken Corder, OKDOT

Highway Users President and CEO Greg Cohen, P.E. (right) congratulates OKHUF Secretary-Treasurer Chuck Mai of AAA Oklahoma, for the federation’s efforts, which were motivated by his legislative updates. The presentation was made at the OKHUF’s Annual Meeting on November 12 in Oklahoma City. Oklahoma City Chamber’s Dean Schirf presided at the meeting where Cohen was the keynote speaker. OKDOT Secretary Gary Ridley also addressed attendees. Paul Matthews is Executive Director of the OKHUF.

The Hawaii Highway Users Alliance received an Honorable Mention and a check for \$350 for their outstanding efforts associated with transportation advocacy and educational outreach as well as for playing a key role in the 2nd International Symposium of Freeway & Tolling Operations (2ISFO) Forum on Highway Capacity and Quality of Service. “We applaud the Hawaii Highway Users Alliance for its key support and session development associated with the 2ISFO; its members, particularly Grace Pacific, that awarded \$15,000 to six students who participated in the graduate student transportation paper competition; and other HHUA members who provided monetary and in-kind support valued at \$11,000 which covered some expenses for a number of distinguished speakers at the 2ISFO,” Chairman Gov. Bill Graves said in announcing the

Honorable Mention Award at The Highway Users Annual Meeting on October 20 in Washington, DC. ■

New Members Increase Grassroots Outreach

Thanks to two of our State Highway Users Conferences, The Highway Users’ grassroots outreach expanded in recent months. The Arizona Department of Transportation, an affiliated member of the Arizona Highway Users Conference, is on board, as are the following organizations associated with the Wyoming Highway Users Federation: Casper Area Chamber of Commerce; DRM, Inc.; Foothills Contracting, Inc.; Legerski Law Office; McMurry Ready Mix; Mountain Cement; Northern Improvement Company; Oftedal Construction; Simon Contractors; Town of Evansville; Worldwide Rental Services; and Wyoming Trucking Association. In addition, Mercer Strategic Alliance, Inc. joined as an Associate Member. The Highway Users welcomed an individual contributor, Omar Chatty, in California. Thanks to all and welcome! ■

Miles to Go...

As The Highway Users gears up for 2010, its membership literature and website will be revamped. A copy of *Miles to Go*, an updated membership recruitment brochure, is enclosed with this issue of *Driving Ahead*. Pass it along to a prospective member and let us know if you would like additional copies to distribute. In the coming months, the membership recruitment section of our website will be redesigned to more aggressively recruit supporters. Our efforts to combat anti-mobility forces will be stepped up to defeat those who have gained the ears of some Members of Congress and U.S. Department of Transportation officials about diverting highway user fees to fund coercive anti-mobility, anti-highway programs. We must build a stronger and more vocal grassroots network to win the battle against anti-mobility forces. ■

