





 **Editor's Note:** The environment for delivering the transportation needs of our nation has never been more challenging and promises to be even more so in the future. We can sit back and wring our hands or take the initiative and deal with it. Not every solution needs to be embodied in a new federal highway bill as three of our stories reflect this week. Doing things differently--that's become a pattern in Indiana with results to show for it. Georgia isn't waiting for Washington to show creativity with their sponsorship program. And finally, South Carolina is stepping up and working to solve problems with local resources so that citizens of the Palmetto State can have needed transportation systems. We have a responsibility to find resourceful solutions in our individual arenas. TW

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Daniels announces creative solution to build new Madison-Milton Bridge

Governor's News Release – September 28, 2010

INDIANAPOLIS – The long-anticipated replacement of the Madison-Milton Bridge will be completed years ahead of schedule, at 20 percent less cost and with significantly less disruption than originally estimated, according to Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels. According to the new plan, the bridge will close for only 10 days during construction rather than an anticipated year-long closure of the U.S. 421 bridge connecting Madison, Indiana, with Milton, Kentucky.

"I've encouraged INDOT to be creative and think differently, and here is a great example of innovation that makes a great outcome even better. Kentucky and Indiana both benefit from the competition created by using our design-build bidding method," said Daniels.

The low bid submitted by Walsh Construction Company of LaPorte, Ind., for \$103 million, is 20 percent below the original \$131 million estimate. It was also the only proposal to offer a plan that closed the bridge for less than a year. The new bridge superstructure is expected to open to traffic atop rehabilitated vertical piers by September 15, 2012, making it the fastest bridge ever to be built over the Ohio River.

The innovative construction method will slide the 3,181-foot-long truss into place along steel rails and plates. The project received a \$20 million federal grant in February, and the remaining cost of the project will be evenly split by both states. The Madison-Milton Bridge was built in 1929 and is too narrow for modern traffic. Its estimated remaining useful life is 10 years. The new bridge will look similar to the existing steel truss, but will include wider lanes and accommodations for bicycles and pedestrians.

NJ City Launches "Surrender Your Permit" Incentives Urging Car-Free Living

<http://hobokennj.org/surrenderyourpermit> - October 6th, 2010

HOBOKEN, N.J. - The city of Hoboken, New Jersey is collaborating with car rental and car sharing agencies, regional transit groups and local businesses in the "Surrender Your Permit" program, which encourages residents to use alternate transportation methods. Those who surrender their parking permit at the Hoboken Parking Utility are awarded with an incentive package worth more than \$500.

"Over the past year, we have been working to tackle Hoboken's parking and transportation challenges by implementing a comprehensive set of progressive, demand-side alternative transportation solutions including the Hop shuttle system with GPS technology, the first city-wide car-sharing program in the nation, multi-space meters, expanded bicycle facilities, and pedestrian safety improvements," said Mayor Dawn Zimmer.

Benefits of the Surrender Your Permit program include 6 months of unlimited access to the Hop Shuttle, premium membership discounts at Hertz and Enterprise rental car agencies, a free specialized bike helmet, biking safety commuter training, and safety features for bikes, and more.

NJ Suspends Dozens of Transportation Projects

CNN Wire – October 5, 2010

New Jersey – The Hudson Rail Tunnel project has been called off by New Jersey's governor. The end of the nation's largest infrastructure project comes along with about 100 other road and rail projects state-funded in New Jersey. Construction had resumed this week on hundreds of construction projects that Gov. Chris Christie's transportation commissioner had ordered suspended because the account funding the projects was running dangerously low. This week marked the end of Christie's 30-day halt of the \$8.7 billion train tunnel which was scheduled for completion in 2018.

"I will not allow taxpayers to fund projects that run over budget with no clear way of how these costs will be paid for," said Christie, a first-term Republican. "The ARC project costs far more than New Jersey taxpayers can afford and the only prudent move is to end this project." The project's cancellation means the \$600 million in taxpayer dollars already spent will be lost.

The 8.8-mile conduit under the Hudson River had \$2.7 billion in funding committed by New Jersey, along with \$3 billion each from the Federal Transit Administration and the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey.

Transportation Committee Chairman John Wisniewski, D-Sayreville, said the project would have meant \$18 billion in economic activity and is the only possibility for relieving congestion on a rail system that relies on tunnels at 98 percent of capacity. He called the cancellation a "travesty." "Something that took 30 years to happen, this governor walks away from," Wisniewski said. "Leadership means seeing a problem and finding the solution. Leadership's not seeing a problem and throwing in the towel."

Ga. DOT seeks Corporate Sponsors to Offset Shortfalls

FOXNews – October 4, 2010

Transportation officials in Georgia are using creative methods to make up funding shortfalls, specifically looking to the private sector to avoid tax increases while attempting to bridge the gap.

"Necessity is the mother of invention," said Georgia DOT spokesman David Spear. "If we're not broke, we're as close as we want to get to it. And we've got to find ways to maximize our resources." Currently, nearly all of the state's cost for Metro Atlanta's federally subsidized highway aid program comes from advertising revenue. The state DOT receives \$1.7 million annually from State Farm Insurance in exchange for the company's logo on the Georgia's 86 Highway Emergency Response Operator vehicles.

Corporate sponsorships also pay the \$500,000 annual cost of Georgia's 511 traffic information system. The state has recently begun outsourcing logo signs for food, lodging, gas and local attractions at highway exits, a program on which the DOT had taken a loss in the past.

"We brought in a private sector partner in that, quite frankly, knows how to do this considerably better than we did," Spear said. "They're making money. We're making money." While some citizen watchdog groups warn against conflicts of interest in such deals, Spears said Georgia DOT does all of the deals by bid, to keep transparency in the public-private partnerships.

S.C. DOT seeks Gas Tax Increase

Charleston Post and Courier

– October 5, 2010

ANDERSON, S.C. - Drivers in South Carolina could see the first gas tax hike in more than two decades next year if lawmakers follow a recommendation in January by state Department of Transportation Secretary Buck Limehouse. In a letter to lawmakers, Limehouse urged a 5.5-cent increase to the gas tax, from 16.75 cents a gallon to 22.25 cents. Currently ranked fourth-lowest in the nation, the state rate has not risen since 1987.

Recent years' proposals to raise the gas tax have been subsequently dismissed by lawmakers, but S.C. DOT is hoping for more support as the agency faces a \$2.4 billion annualized shortfall over the next 20 years. South Carolina has the fourth-largest state-maintained highway system in the nation, with 41,460 miles and 8,357 bridges. The state legislature offers very little support for the system, with a \$57,000 annual contribution.

Senate President Pro Tem Glenn McConnell, R-Charleston, seems to agree something needs to be done. "Our road system is in bad shape," he said. "We're going to have to get adequate funding from somewhere," said Limehouse.

Colorado Hunts for New Ideas to Fix Old Infrastructure

Real Aspen – October 4, 2010

Colorado - Lawmakers and transportation officials in Colorado are looking for unique ideas to solve the state's transportation funding crisis as stimulus dollars will dry up over the next year. The controversial Funding Advancements for Surface Transportation and Economic Recovery (FASTER) vehicle registration fee hike has not made a dent in the state's need for an additional \$500 million annually to fund an acceptable level of transportation maintenance and repairs. FASTER advocates said it would bring in an additional \$250 million a year, but collection is much lower because fewer people are registering new vehicles as a result of the recession.

"In this economy, raising taxes to pay for highways would be a nonstarter," said state Sen. Al White, R-Hayden. "CDOT said we need half a billion minimally to maintain a grade C level maintenance on our highways, and that it was closer to a billion to do it in a way that we could be proud of, and I don't see those dollars coming from anywhere."

Other controversial solutions include increased tolling or charging a fee for Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), or raising the state gas tax. The Colorado Department of Transportation is studying the installation of "zipper lanes," or temporary lane dividers to increase the number of eastbound lanes on I-70 during the ski season, when the interstate is severely congested on Sunday afternoons. The roughly \$35 million zipper lanes would decrease the westbound lanes to one, cutting travel time between Silver Plume and El Rancho in half, while doubling travel time for westbound traffic.

State Rep. Christine Scanlan, D-Dillon, whose district has one of the worst bottlenecks in the state – Interstate 70 – said it will be up to the next governor to make transportation a priority. "FASTER is a Band-aid under any circumstances; it wasn't a fix," Scanlan said. "Whoever is governor is going to have to confront how do you rank transportation versus education, versus health care, versus some of the other general fund tensions. The legislature can only do so much without the governor saying, 'This is a priority.'"

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