



THE STOUFFER REPORT

Senator Bill Stouffer
Senate District 21

For the Week of:
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Capitol Building, Room 332
Jefferson City, MO 65101

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Missouri's Transportation Needs

The tragic Minnesota bridge collapse is a haunting reminder of the importance of keeping up with the maintenance of our country's transportation infrastructure. The end of July brought hundreds of transportation officials to Jefferson City to attend the [Joint Committee on Transportation Oversight](#).

The committee discussed funding options for transportation infrastructure in Missouri. The meeting featured presentations by MoDOT Director Pete Rahn and Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy at the U.S. Department of Transportation David Horner.

More than 250 people were expected to attend the meeting, billed as the 2007 Transportation Funding Summit. Attendees, numbering well over 300, reviewed what other states are doing regarding transportation infrastructure funding. As co-chair of the transportation oversight committee, I know it is all too important to fully fund our state's transportation needs.

MoDOT described Missouri's current transportation funding situation as "the perfect storm" — a storm caused by lower state revenue, increasing construction costs, and fewer federal dollars. Several options to raise revenue to support the current transportation funding situation were introduced to the transportation oversight committee, including a proposal to increase taxes. MoDOT also presented a status report on the department's transportation revenues and expenditures, including a detailed summary of current and future projects.

Safe & Sound Bridge Improvement Program

MoDOT has identified 800 of its lowest-rated bridges and has created a process in which the department will quickly replace or rehabilitate the structures — bringing all the bridges up to good condition by 2012 and maintaining them in that condition for at least 25 years.

According to MoDOT, there is no reason to believe any of Missouri's bridges are unsafe. The state's bridges are inspected every other year. There are 10,240 bridges on the Missouri state highway system, making our state the seventh largest total nationwide. More than 1,000 of these bridges are in poor condition and the Safe & Sound Initiative will address most of these structures.

The Future of Transportation — Reconstructing the I-70 and I-44 Corridors

Many projects undertaken in 2005 and 2006 will not add capacity to Missouri's oldest two interstate highways that are becoming more and more congested. The projects under the "Smoother Roads Initiative" did not improve the dated designs of the highways, poorly functioning interchanges, and the underlying problems of the original pavement, some of which includes sections of old U.S. Routes 40 and 66.

Missourians are driving on major highways that are safer and smoother. But it will require a significant annual investment to keep I-70 and I-44 in good or better condition. Resurfacing the 2,380 lane miles of I-70 and I-44 every eight to 10 years, and maintaining median guard cable, as well as maintaining, rehabilitating and replacing bridges (510 between the two corridors) will cost in the magnitude of \$70-90 million per year. Rebuilding these highways would eliminate the need for much of that cost, freeing it for use on other projects.

If you have questions or comments about Missouri's transportation needs or any other issue, please call my office toll free (866) 768-3987 or send me an e-mail at bstouffer@senate.mo.gov.

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