

NEVADA HIGHWAY USERS COALITION

Highway Users Coalition Unveils Public Campaign for Highway Funding Urges Legislature to Address \$3.8 Billion Shortfall this Session

Funding Bill SB 324 Set for Hearing Tuesday at 1 p.m.

Share Your Highway Stories at www.fixNVroads.com

(Carson City, NV, April 9, 2007) – A coalition of Nevada organizations and business leaders representing a full range of highway users today launched a public information campaign urging lawmakers to address the Silver State’s dire transportation needs.

“Nevada’s roads, bridges and highways are failing the needs of today’s residents and visitors,” said Stan Goodin, Chairman of the Nevada Highway Users Coalition. “Traffic continues to increase with our booming population, compromising safety and costing drivers lost time and money.”

A Blue Ribbon task Force created by the Nevada Department of Transportation found in 2006 that the state faces a \$3.8 billion shortfall in funding through 2015 for highway projects needed to accommodate significant growth in the state. The \$3.8 billion shortfall does not include inflation on future projects. Road conditions are likely to get worse as the Nevada Department of Transportation reported in 2006 that it received only slightly more than half of the \$158 million needed to maintain current road conditions over the next five years.

The focus of the public information campaign is the web site www.fixNVroads.com which will serve as a warehouse of information and access for Nevada’s drivers to the Legislature. The Web site will include driver feedback and offer potential solutions to the Nevada highway safety and congestion problem.

“If we delay, the problem gets worse and costs rise,” Goodin said. “The Coalition will also address accountability in our highway funding; highway funds should only go for highway maintenance, construction and rehabilitation.”

The Coalition members are supporting legislation contained in SB 324, the Highway Funding and Accountability Act of 2007. This bill is scheduled to receive its first hearing at 1 p.m. on Tuesday, April 10 before the Senate Taxation Committee (Rm. 2135).

(more)

Some of the key facts* facing lawmakers this session:

- Nevada led the nation in population growth from 1990 to 2005
- Vehicle traffic on our highways has doubled from 1990 to 2005 by 103 percent, from 10.2 billion vehicle miles to traveled to 20.7 billion vehicle miles in '05
- From 1990 to 2005, total lane miles of highways in Nevada increased by 12 percent. 44 percent of our highways are rated "congested" because they carry a level of traffic that is likely to result in delays during peak travel hours.
- Heavier traffic on our roads and freeways means a greater risk for accidents. Nevada currently has a traffic fatality rate 42 percent higher than the national average making Nevada's roadways the sixth deadliest in the country.
- The buying power of Nevada's 17.65 cents-per-gallon motor fuel tax that is dedicated to state highways has decreased by 43 percent since it was last increased in 1992.
- The average rush hour driver loses as many as 93 hours per year in travel day, equivalent to more than two weeks of work, or a typical family vacation. This annual "congestion tax" can be as high as \$1,598 in wasted time.**

"For a little less than 25 cents a day, less than a big coffee drink per week, Nevada highway users would be able to address the shortfall," Goodin said. "We need the Legislature to recognize the bigger cost of not acting and its impact on tourism, business and safety."

The Nevada Highway Users Coalition was formed to advance the rights of Nevada's residents and visitors to travel on safe, reliable public roads; for the efficient transport of goods and effective public safety; and to hold government accountable for ensuring financing is transparent, motivated by public good and dedicated to transportation purposes.

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* MAKING THE GRADE IN NEVADA:

An Analysis of the Ability of Nevada's Transportation System to Meet the State's Need for Safe and Efficient Mobility, March 2007. TRIP National Transportation Research Group

** United States Department of Transportation

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