

Transportation Reauthorization Update

The U.S. House and Senate passed a transportation bill July 29, 2005, that will provide \$286.4 billion in funding through 2009. This bill replaces TEA 21, which expired Sept. 30, 2003. The Department has operated under a series of short-term extensions for the 22 months since the expiration of TEA 21.

Overall, the bill provides \$1.55 billion for highways, transit, and motor carrier safety. The bill provides North Dakota with \$1.375 billion to be used for construction and maintenance of roads and bridges through 2009. The bill provides a 30 percent increase in funding over the TEA 21 legislation. The bill contains \$40 million for the replacement of the Liberty Memorial Bridge in Bismarck-Mandan, and \$70 million to strengthen and repair flood-damaged roads in the Devils Lake Basin. Transit funding for North Dakota doubles over the life of the bill from \$4.76 million in 2004 to \$9.9 million in 2009. The President signed the bill into law on Aug. 10, 2005. We are now faced with the challenges of interpreting the rules, regulations, and funding stipulations associated with the bill.

State Legislative Update

The North Dakota legislature continued its support for transportation infrastructure in the state by providing additional state revenue to match federal aid and maintain and improve our road and bridge network. Some of the fee increases that were passed during the 59th session include:

- A two cents per gallon increase in the state motor fuel tax, which went into effect on July 1, 2005.
- A minimum increase of \$11 in fees applied across the board for car, truck, and motorhome registrations that went into effect on July 1.
- An increase in registration fees for pick-up trucks that will bring the fees for pick-up trucks in line with those for passenger vehicles. Half of the increase to pick-up registration fees went into effect July 1, 2005. The remaining half of the increase will go into effect July 1, 2007.



Transaction Initiatives 1&2

Legislative Support for the Highway Performance Classification System. The HPCS was endorsed by the Legislature during its most recent session. The system identifies desired levels of service on a five-tier state roadways network. NDDOT is in the process of implementing the levels of service and standards outlined in the HPCS.

Airline Service. Eight North Dakota commercial airports are continuing to experience a 6% increase in passengers this year to date. Northwest Airlines (NWA) has maintained full service as a mechanics' strike took place in late August. The number of proposed seat reductions for October are either being reduced or negotiated to be restored as fall traffic is strong with upcoming hunting and business traffic sales. The Essential Air Service routing at Devils Lake and Jamestown was rebid by Northwest-Mesaba airlink and negotiations are pending with US DOT. United Airlines is finalizing bankruptcy outcomes with strong summer regional jet loads in both the Fargo and Bismarck markets. Dickinson and Williston have two roundtrips daily to Denver, but failed to receive an award for a third flight as recent oil exploration increased demand. Governor Hoeven announced on Aug. 25th that the Fargo Airport received a US DOT grant of \$675,000 to offset start-up costs for new American West direct service to Phoenix beginning this fall. Allegiant Air will start service from Fargo in November, and will also add a

third—and possibly a fourth—weekly flight from Bismarck with direct service to Las Vegas from both cities.

Mobility Study. Recommended base level government supported mobility services for various demographic groups and geographic areas have been identified during development of the draft statewide personal mobility plan (Initiative 15). The draft study is being reviewed by NDDOT and the North Dakota State University Small Urban and Rural Transit Center. The draft document was developed by a steering committee comprised of transportation related agencies and transit providers.

Investment Strategy Team. NDDOT has assembled a team to update its current investment strategy for its three-year construction program. The new strategy will consider the recently adopted Highway Performance Classification System, types of work, and distribution of work; identify current and potential funding sources; and allow the department to better achieve its goals and meet public expectations.

Design Standards Team. NDDOT has assembled a team from various areas of the department to update its current design standards. The new standards integrate the Highway Performance Classification System, traffic levels, and various construction strategies to better serve the public and meet department goals.

Initiative 3

Inter-Agency Committee for Devils Lake Roads as Dams. A committee of state and federal agencies has spent a number of years seeking resolution to the problem of roads acting as dams in the Devils Lake area. The work has recently been rewarded with new eligibility and \$70 million in earmarked emergency relief funding in the new federal highway bill with which to correct the existing conditions.

Metropolitan Planning Organization Meetings. NDDOT representatives meet monthly with each of three North Dakota MPOs to assist their technical advisory committees in long-range planning activities and making recommendations to the policy boards.

Tribal Planning Offices & Representation in the State Transportation Improvement Plan. NDDOT began meeting annually with each individual tribal planning office to review the draft STIP during the annual comment period. This is in addition to the presentation of the STIP at an annual meeting where all tribes are represented.



Transaction Initiative 4

Four Bears Bridge. The 48-ton concrete segment placed on the east end of Four Bears Bridge July 25, 2005 was the last of 484 segments that span 4,500 feet over Lake Sakakawea. The bridge is expected to open for traffic in September; removal of the old structure will begin as soon as traffic is moved to the new bridge. At \$55.4 million, the Four Bears Bridge is the largest single contract ever let by the NDDOT. NDDOT and the Three Affiliated Tribes will celebrate the completion of the bridge with a joint ribbon-cutting event on October 3, 2005.

Construction of US 281 Relocation in Progress. A large portion of US 281 was in danger of inundation due to the rising waters of Devils Lake. An extensive environmental review determined that a more prudent and cost-effective solution was to relocate the roadway to higher ground west of the existing alignment. Construction of the relocation began this spring and is expected to be completed by next year.

Theodore Roosevelt Expressway & Central North American Trade Corridor. The new Federal Highway Reauthorization Bill identifies US 85 running from Rapid City, SD, through Williston, ND, to the Canadian border—referred to as the Theodore Roosevelt Expressway—as a federal high-priority corridor. The bill also identifies the Central North American Trade Corridor as US 83, from the South Dakota state line north through Bismarck and Minot, to the international border with Canada. The “high priority” designation allows the corridor coalition to access federal funds to study feasibility and options for corridor enhancements, and eventually to apply for special funding for corridor improvements.

Airport Terminals. Terminals have been the major focus of funding this summer at North Dakota's commercial airports. The Devils Lake Terminal, built to accommodate Northwest Airlines service to Minneapolis, opened in early July with a ribbon cutting by Governor Hoeven, Senator Dorgan, Mayor Fred Bott, and other community officials. Bismarck's new terminal opened in May 2005, and features the state's first automated baggage system that screens 100% of departing baggage using new CTX detection imaging. Williston is installing the final floor tiles and painting walls in anticipation of a September opening for its new terminal. The Fargo and Grand Forks airports have commissioned studies of new or expanded terminals as efforts to reduce delays in response to Transportation Security Administration passenger flows.



Access Management. NDDOT staff surveyed 17 states to identify the benefits of creating a formal highway access management plan. Effective access management plans can reduce crashes, improve roadway traffic capacity, reduce travel delay and improve property values. Staff recommendations are being considered by NDDOT management.

Transaction Initiative 5

Four-Laning of US 2 to Increase Competitiveness of Northwest Corner of the State. NDDOT has graded four segments approximately 10 miles long and paved one of those segments in its efforts toward completion of the four-laning of US 2 between Minot and Williston. Once complete, the four-lane highway will bring new economic opportunities to the northwest corner of North Dakota.

Cross Border Regional Truck Transportation Conference. NDDOT and the NDSU Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute hosted the Cross Border Regional Truck Transportation Conference June 15-16 to identify steps that can be taken to bring about more uniformity in truck size and weight regulations and permitting. The conference was attended by people from six states and two Canadian provinces representing government and the private sector. Speaker presentations can be seen at www.state.nd.us/dot/truckconference.html

State Aviation Impact Study. Federal Aviation Administration provided a grant to the ND Aeronautics Commission in July 2005 for a state aviation impact study. Impact studies were also performed in 1988, 1994, and 1999, thus allowing the commission to prioritize airport construction grants that generate the greatest economic impacts to the North Dakota airport system. Flint Communications in Fargo was hired as the consultant to assist in the project surveys and to produce the report. Airline passenger surveys are underway at the eight commercial airports to determine the expenditures of visitors to North Dakota. In 1999, each air traveler visitor spent an average of \$524 dollars per trip to the state. General aviation uses such as aerial application, air taxi flights, air ambulance and flying doctors occur daily at the state's 90 public use airports.

Tourism Signing Advisory Committee Started to Help Promote Tourism. Just over a year ago, NDDOT formed a committee of outside agency representatives and private individuals to review tourism signage requests. The Tourism Signing Advisory Committee developed guidelines for submittals and has afforded more businesses and agencies the opportunity to obtain tourism signing placed along state highways. Depending on criteria, cost sharing from the department has been available in some cases.

Meetings with Ag, Commerce, Tourism and Trade Office. NDDOT meets quarterly with the departments of Commerce, Tourism and Agriculture and the ND Trade Office to discuss ways to enhance the state's economic development and competitiveness.

ND Trade Office Export Expansion Workshop. NDDOT staff attended the ND Trade Office Export Expansion Workshop in Dickinson to learn more about the transportation needs of North Dakota businesses that are involved in exporting products and crops. The workshop was one of three held on location around the state.

Transaction Initiative 6

Load Limit Posting Changes. NDDOT has completed a policy and procedures review for posting load restrictions resulting in a new method for posting load limits. Roads will no longer be posted using the Unrestricted, Class A, Class 1, or Class 2 restrictions. The new system will post roads as Restricted by Legal Weight, 8-ton, 7-ton, 6-ton or 5-ton. The change will provide greater uniformity with adjacent states and allow for better communication with the trucking industry.

Transaction Initiative 7

Intermodal Updates. NDDOT continues to support studies in Minot, Fargo and Bismarck that examine the opportunities provided by intermodal transportation service options.

Transaction Initiative 8

Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute Study. Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute under contract to NDDOT has completed the first phase of a draft study determining the economic and safety benefits of greater uniformity of motor carrier size and weight regulations and permitting. The preliminary study findings were presented at the Cross Border Truck Transportation Conference (see comments Initiative #5). The final report is expected to be completed in October.



Transaction Initiative 9

Free wireless Internet at Internet Visitors' Centers. Free wireless internet service is available for use by the traveling public at nine visitors centers located along the I-94 and I-29 corridors. The wireless "hot spots" use WiFi certified access points that are compatible with most computer adapters used in North America today. Coverage areas include the rest area lobbies, and car and truck parking lots. There are no login names, passwords or charges.

Real-Time Road Condition Cameras. NDDOT is in the process of installing cameras with their road weather information sensors so that the public will be able to view actual road conditions at the camera sites when accessing roadway information. Plans are to have the equipment installed at six sites by the end of 2006.

Microwave Beam Detection Study to Reduce Vehicle vs. Deer Crashes. The multi-state pool-fund study analyzing ways to reduce vehicle vs. deer crashes has been extended in order to evaluate the effectiveness of microwave beam detection of animals crossing roadways (see TransAction Progress Jan 2005).

REAL ID National Driver License Program for Security & Safety. The REAL ID Act was passed by Congress to make the driver's license systems in the country more secure. An individual will have to be a legal resident of the country and provide more forms of identification that will have to be verified in order to obtain a driver's license. The federal law requires state driver's license holders to be linked to a national data base that is to be developed.

Anti-Icing System Closer to Reality at the Red River Bridge. NDDOT has recently signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the Minnesota DOT to jointly install an anti-icing system on the Red River Bridge at Fargo. Implementation of this Intelligent Transportation System technology will help keep the heavily traveled bridge free of ice in order to prevent crashes and save future maintenance dollars. The system will be operational this coming winter.

Snow & Ice Pool Fund Study. NDDOT is participating in a nine-state member pool-funded study which focuses on developing a Maintenance Decision Support System for better managing the department's snow and ice control activities. The study is a follow up to the Federal Highway Administration research, with the objective to provide better response to snow and ice activities by engaging the best weather information available, identification of existing road conditions, and provide a decision support system to maintenance

managers in the field on optimization of snow and ice control treatments. The project is in its second year of development.

Transaction Initiative 10

Freight Initiative With Washington. North Dakota State University, Washington State University, and the University of Washington have developed the Regional Center for Freight Mobility. A \$500,000 appropriation in the 2005 Department of Transportation Appropriations Act will allow RCFM to develop a regional freight transportation database, research program and outreach program for 12 states reaching from Illinois to the Pacific Northwest.

Transaction Initiative 11

Small Rural Economic Development Projects. NDDOT established the Small Rural Economic Development Projects program to provide assistance in upgrading infrastructure to new businesses in small rural areas. Starting in 2008, the annual statewide allocation for this program will be \$640,000.

Small Urban Highway Program. NDDOT established a Small Urban Highway Program to provide assistance in upgrading state highways through cities with a population under 5,000 and enhance the appearance of streets and sidewalks. Starting in 2008, there will be \$3 million available annually for this program.

Transaction Initiative 12

Airport Data Collection Completed. NDDOT has completed data collection with its pavement data collection van at all of the states airports as part of an interagency agreement with the Aeronautics Commission. NDDOT was able to gather data at three to four airports each day, whereas previously the Aeronautics Commission used two to three person teams that were only able to gather information from one airport each day. This cooperative agreement saved the Aeronautics Commission time and money and greatly reduced the impacts to the airports.

Transaction Initiative 13

Western Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials. NDDOT director, Dave Sprynczynatyk, has been selected to serve as WASHTO president for the upcoming year. WASHTO is a group of 18 western states that work cooperatively on transportation issues on a regional and national level.

NDDOT Staff Assists Federal Railroad Administration. At the request of the Federal Railroad Administration and the University of California, NDDOT Rail Section staff recently helped to develop the agenda for the 2006 Western Regional Highway-Rail Grade-Crossing Safety Conference. NDDOT At-Grade Rail Crossing Manager Jim Styron has been selected as the moderator for the "Safe & Efficient Low Cost Rail Crossing Alternatives" breakout session.

2005 International Highway Engineering Exchange Program Conference. NDDOT will host the 2005 IHEEP conference in Bismarck Sept. 11-15, 2005. Diane Gunsch, NDDOT Information Technology Division and 2005 International HEEP President, expects approximately 300 people to participate in the conference and exchange information relating to highway and bridge engineering.

University of Iowa Center for Portland Cement Concrete Pavement Technology Mobile Testing Lab. NDDOT is one of 17 state departments of transportation and several concrete industry organizations who have joined together to participate in a pooled fund study research project designed to update testing for the five most important properties of concrete at the time the mix of materials that goes into the concrete is initially designed, when the pre-construction mix is verified, and at the point when the quality control is checked during construction. The five-year study is designed to prevent premature pavement distress in portland cement concrete roadways.



Transaction Initiative 14

Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan. In cooperation with the Federal Highway Association, NDDOT has developed a Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan which involves combining enforcement, education, and engineering efforts that will reduce fatalities on North Dakota roadways. The CHSP incorporates strategies and priorities from the Highway Safety Plan and Statewide Transportation Improvement Program to facilitate life-saving measures and improve safety on our roadways. Input for these strategies involved collaboration by experts from engineering, enforcement, and the behavioral side of the traffic safety division to produce a planning document for statewide implementation.

NDDOT Assisting New York DOT With Border Crossing Program. NDDOT is assisting the New York State Department of Transportation to update the Security Prosperity Partnership program border infrastructure compendium. NDDOT is also updating information for the Pembina and Portal ports of entry. The Security and Prosperity Partnership program is a trilateral (Canada, US & Mexico) agreement to increase the security, prosperity, and quality of life in North America.



Transaction Initiative 15

Status of mobility study. The NDSU Small Urban Rural Transit Center working under contract with NDDOT has completed a draft of the statewide mobility plan. The plan contains an extensive listing of personal mobility services in the state, a set of base-level mobility goals, and identifies a series of recommendations. The draft plan is currently being reviewed by NDDOT management.

Transaction Initiative 16

MonDak Ag Open. NDDOT staff attended the Mon-Dak Ag Open event, which showcases agricultural and business development in northwestern North Dakota and northeastern Montana. The annual event provides NDDOT staff with an excellent opportunity to discuss transportation issues with local businessmen and women.

Monitoring Impacts Related to Ethanol Plant Expansion. NDDOT continues to analyze the transportation impacts of proposed ethanol plants in Underwood and Richardton. Both of the proposed plants will be importing large volumes of corn and exporting ethanol and feed by-products.

North Dakota's Transportation Mission:

North Dakota will provide a transportation system that offers personal choices, enhances business opportunities, and promotes the wise use of all resources.

North Dakota's Transportation Vision:

North Dakota's transportation system is an important part of regional, national, and global systems, developed strategically to help grow and diversify the economy and enhance our quality of life.

North Dakota's Transportation Goals:

- Safe and secure transportation for residents, visitors, and freight.
- A transportation system that allows optimum personal mobility.
- A transportation system that will allow efficient and effective movement of freight.
- A transportation system that enhances economic diversity, growth, and competitiveness.
- Funding sufficient to protect North Dakota's transportation investment and address future transportation needs.