



PORTS-TO-PLAINS INFORMATION HIGHWAY

Inside this Issue

- 1 State Funding in Colorado
Texas Department of Transportation Report
- 2 Funding in CO - cont.
TxDOT Report - cont.
Ports-to-Plains Annual Meeting Scheduled for October
- 3 PTP Spotlight- Raton, New Mexico
- 4 PTP Spotlight continued
- 5 Transportation for Tomorrow ... Report of the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission - Part II
- 6
- 7
- 8 2008 Investors in Progress

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State Funding Committed in Colorado

Several years ago the consideration of Referendum C in Colorado was supported by the Ports-to-Plains Trade Corridor Coalition because of the need to complete Colorado's 28 Strategic Projects which includes U.S 287, the Ports-to-Plains Corridor. Ports-to-Plains is certainly being benefited by the passage of Referendum C. The passage of Referendum C in Colorado allows certain vehicle related sales tax funding to be transferred from the General Fund to CDOT under legislation called Senate Bill 1.

Last year, CDOT completed two projects on U.S. 287: one south of Lamar which reconstructed an 11.4 mile portion of U.S. 287 and one just east of Kit Carson which allowed a new bridge to be installed over the Union Pacific Railroad.

The project south of Lamar cost \$22.2 million with \$15 million of federal earmark funds and a little over \$7 million of state funding from S.B.1.

-continued on page 2

Texas Department of Transportation Report



Amadeo Saenz Jr., P.E.
TxDOT Executive
Director

If you've read a newspaper recently, you've probably heard about the Texas Department of Transportation's cash flow situation. At a joint meeting of the Senate Finance and Senate Transportation and Homeland Security committees, senators had some tough words for - and fair questions about - TxDOT and our cash flow projections. These questions have now raised uncertainties for Texans about how we handle our finances and the future of transportation projects statewide.

First, an admission: TxDOT made a mistake in the amount of money that we thought would be available for projects this fiscal year. It was an internal miscalculation, a misunderstanding of a cash flow document that tracks the funding we use to bring projects to contract. We thought we could reasonably award - and pay for - \$4.2 billion in projects this fiscal year. And that number was reported to our transportation partners around the state. It was incorrect, and after discovering our mistake, we revised our estimate to \$3.1 billion. Unfortunately, some of our transportation partners were already expecting us to award projects at the higher amount.

-continued on page 2



State Funding Committed in Colorado - continued from page 1

The Kit Carson bridge project included \$2.4 million of federal earmark funding and \$6.1 million of state funding from S.B.1.

This year, CDOT and the Transportation Commission awarded a project on U.S. 287 north of Kit Carson with funding all from the state SB 1 funds at \$7.5 million.

In February the Transportation Commission voted unanimously to commit \$25.1 million of S.B. 1 funding for the largest state funding of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor to date. To understand the commitment being made to Ports-to-Plains by the Commission, one needs to understand the percentage of funds available statewide. The S.B. 1 transfer to CDOT in February was \$121 million. Of that transfer, \$70.6 million is committed to pay TRANS bond payments. Under S.B. 1, 10% or \$12.1 million is required to be used for strategic transit projects. This left \$38.3 million available statewide for highway projects. Of that amount, the Commission approved \$24 million for reconstruction projects on U.S 287 in Region 2 (Southeast) and \$1.1 million for engineering and design on the remaining portions of U.S. 287 in Region 1 (Cheyenne and Lincoln counties).

Without the passage of Referendum C, none of the almost \$46 million in state funding would have been available for projects along the Ports-to-Plains Corridor in Colorado. CDOT continues to make a significant financial commitment to the Ports-to-Plains Corridor.

TxDOT Report continued from page 1

And as can be reasonably expected, some of them were disappointed and angry. We understand why they are upset, and we regret what happened.

Second, a solution: In an effort to prevent a future occurrence, I have centralized the fund forecasting, fund management and fund accountability functions at our Austin headquarters. This will remove any barriers between those who plan projects, those who schedule projects and those who pay the bills.

We are committed to improving our transportation system in Texas, including the Port-to-Plains Corridor. Paramount to the success of this project is our partnership with local officials, the Ports-to-Plains Corridor Coalition and the other states along this transportation artery.

TxDOT will work very hard to make transportation safer, faster and more reliable for the citizens of Texans. We will live up to the standards that we expect of ourselves, and that Texans have come to rely on.

Amadeo Saenz Jr., P.E.
Executive Director
Texas Department of Transportation

Ports-to-Plains Annual Meeting Scheduled for October

The Ports-to-Plains Annual Meeting will be held October 1 - 3 in Del Rio, Texas with special tours and events in Acuña Mexico. Event organizers hope to have a greater focus on the business impact the corridor will have throughout the region.

"We want to show business people along the corridor how Ports-to-Plains can help them make money," said Ports-to-Plains President Michael Reeves.

The conference will feature a trade show for businesses to display their goods and services and to network with other business people along the corridor. Speakers and panels will focus on how businesses can capitalize on their location upon the corridor, and how communities can use the corridor to attract new business. The meeting will also offer tours of maquiladora factories in Acuña.

"This will be a great opportunity for people to see first hand how new trade opportunities can create trade on both sides of the border, and to show how the border actually works. It is great to see the border crossings, the security and the trade, and understand that trade and security can work together for everyone's economic benefit," said Reeves.

Details will be sent soon on opportunities for sponsorship, exhibiting and registration.

Ports-to-Plains Membership Spotlight: Raton, New Mexico

Raton, New Mexico, is located on Highway 64/87, which today is the Ports-to-Plains Corridor, connecting Interstate 25 and U.S. Highway 87. Raton and Colfax County are both supporting members of the Ports-to-Plains Coalition. Almost 200 years have passed, and legend and myth continue to abound regarding the Santa Fe Trail, which passed right through Raton, taking the mountain route. The Raton Pass and the Santa Fe Trail defined a primary trade route in the 1800's covering the expanse of the western terrain from Missouri to New Mexico. The route evolved into a complex web of international business, social ties, tariffs, and laws, with New Mexico and Missouri merchants eventually doing business with concerns as far away as New York, London, and Paris.



Raton Pass in the early 1900's

Penny Peryatel, Raton business owner and a member of the Ports-to-Plains Board of Directors, emphasizes how these same trade opportunities exist today for Raton and the surrounding Colfax County communities. Highway 64/87 is today's trade corridor connecting Raton, New Mexico to the Dumas, Texas economic development opportunities. Penny went on to say that, "Raton provides the traveler many opportunities to enjoy the outdoors - biking/hiking at Sugarite Canyon State Park; experiencing the most comprehensive shooting facility at the NRA Whittington Center, and enjoying a game of golf at New Mexico's premier 9-hole golf course, the Raton Municipal Golf Course."

Raton has a population of just over 7000 residents, with cattle ranching, tourism, retail and small industry making up the economic base for Raton and it just became home to the new Miner's Colfax Medical Center. The Raton Municipal Airport, a two-runway, all weather facility, makes flying in and out of Raton a breeze. "We feel that the Ports-to-Plains Corridor has made a significant difference in our economic future, and we are taking steps as a community to assist our existing business-base," stated Penny.

When Raton Mayor Joe Apache was asked about the benefits of Ports-to-Plains, he stated, "Having seen the trade volume in Laredo first-hand, I truly believe the Ports-to-Plains Corridor will only benefit Raton and Northeast New Mexico and Southern Colorado for years to come. The Mayor added, "Our challenge as a community along this corridor is to become a destination for travelers and a hub for businesses doing business in the Rocky Mountain Region."



Looking South into Raton Pass

"Colfax County is proud to be a member of the Ports-to-Plains Coalition," according to County Manager Don Day. "Colfax County has hundreds of miles of scenic and historic byways. Completion of the four lane project of US 64/87 between Raton and Clayton is vital to the safety of motorists who travel through this area." Day went on to say, "This project will greatly improve the ability of our visitors and travelers to safely reach their destinations while providing opportunities to see some of the most scenic landscape in the country. Ports-to-Plains will help open the gateway to the Rockies and the vast vacation opportunities awaiting throughout Colfax County."

-continued on page 4

Raton, New Mexico - continued from page 3

Raton's City Manager Pete Mileta, Jr. stated that Raton is known today as the Gate City, a gateway to the Rocky Mountains coming from the east or the Land of Enchantment as you head south. "Raton is positioned equi-center to Amarillo, Albuquerque and Denver with over 2.5 million customers within 3 and ½ hours drive," said Mileta. "In Raton you can enjoy bringing up your family or retiring in a community of less than 10,000 but still enjoy the ability of getting to a metropolitan area within a few hours drive. Raton and Trinidad share shopping and recreational activities. A trip over Raton Pass only takes about 20 minutes each direction most days of the year." Mileta went on to say, "Lakes and wildlife highlight the area that also boasts ownership of the World's Premiere Outdoor Shooting Facility, the NRA Whittington Center. With over 180,000 visitors each year the Whittington Center hosts national and regional shooting events throughout the year.

Projects along the New Mexico portion of US 64/87 located on the Ports-to-Plains Corridor are currently under construction. The project was divided into seven segments with 12-15 miles in each. While the total project costs were once estimated at \$134 million dollars in 2003, inflation prices have increased tremendously, therefore the 2010 completion date has been extended. The primary funding for this project has been through Governor Richardson's Investment Partnership (GRIP) in addition to federal earmarks throughout the years.

Paul Gray, District 4 Engineer for New Mexico Department of Transportation submitted the following update on the corridor project status.

Project Number	Termini	Status	Amount
G4014	MP 349 to 360	95% complete	\$22.4M contracted
G4024	MP 360 to 374	Unfunded	\$35.0M estimated
G4034	MP 374 to 388	Unfunded	\$35.0M estimated
G4044	MP 388 to 400	June 08 let for bid	\$25.0M programmed
G4054	MP 400 to 411	98% complete	\$19.0M contracted
G4064	MP 411 to 422	Complete	\$16.5M paid
G4074	MP 422 to 430	45% complete	\$15.4M contracted

Total programmed, contracted or paid = \$98.3M

In addition, Gray stated, "Back in 2003 when we received the enabling legislation, we were confident that 4-laning this portion of US 64/87 was achievable with programmed amounts. But as everyone knows, construction costs have skyrocketed in our changing economy. The outlook for future federal aid is bleak. NMDOT recognizes the significance of this route to the state's, region's and nation's economy and will continue to work with our State legislature and our federal partners to identify funds to complete this important trade corridor."

"Ports-to-Plains is committed to helping all it can for completion of this project in New Mexico as well as for other projects along the Corridor," stated Ports-to-Plains President Michael Reeves.

Meanwhile, make Raton a part of your travel plans. You won't be disappointed.

For Additional Information and Access to Previous Newsletters

Visit us Online at: www.portstoplains.com

Transportation for Tomorrow ... Report of the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission - Part II

"The Commission believes that to meet 21st Century transportation needs, it is necessary for Congress to establish a new Federal Compact with the American people."

"We propose the new Compact with the American people be fulfilled through a performance-based approach that identifies and establishes priorities, and avoids parochial and wasteful spending."

(Transportation for Tomorrow, Volume I: Recommendations, Page 9)

This month the focus will begin looking upon the recommendations to Reform Institutions and Programs. As stated last month, the Commission's recommendations for reform of the federal surface transportation program constitute three legs of a stool. The first leg is accelerating the lengthy process by which transportation projects are delivered, saving both time and money. The second leg is consolidating the numerous investment categories of current law into a more focused, performance-based set of transportation programs related to objectives of genuine national interest. The third leg involves creating an independent National Surface Transportation Commission (or NASTRAC) to oversee development of a national strategic plan for transportation investment and to recommend appropriate revenue adjustments to the Congress to implement that plan. This article will focus on Performance Based Programs Related to National Objectives.

Congressional earmarking has increased from 10 projects in 1982 to more than 6,300 projects in SAFETEA-LU (2005). In addition, the lack of transparent analyses of costs and benefits of alternative investments makes achieving the best portfolio of investments unlikely. The American public will have little confidence in infrastructure investment decisions that are the result of highly politicized public and private sector deals.

Currently there are 108 federal surface transportation programs. The Commission recommended those be replaced with ten programs that are refocused on the national interest that are performance-driven and outcome based. The Commission pointed out that President Dwight D. Eisenhower had the foresight to understand how a system of Interstate highways would transform the Nation. The result of that foresight is clear. Further it showed how important that national focus would be in the future with a 50% increase in the U.S. population in the next 50 year combined with greater pressures from global trade on the U.S. international gateways and domestic freight infrastructure.

-continued on page 6

In brief, the new user-financed Federal surface transportation program the Commission proposes will be performance-driven, outcome based, generally mode-neutral, and refocused to pursue activities of genuine national interest ...

(Transportation for Tomorrow, Volume I: Recommendations, Page 10)

Transportation for Tomorrow - continued from page 5

Refocusing the Federal Program structure

Current Federal Surface Transportation Programs	
Federal Highway Administration	62 Programs
Federal Transit Administration	20 Programs
Federal Railroad Administration	6 Programs
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration	12 Programs
Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration	8 Programs
Total	108 Programs



Proposed Federal Surface Transportation Programs

1. Rebuilding America: A National Asset Management Program
2. Freight Transportation: A Program to Enhance U.S. Global Competitiveness
3. Congestion Relief: A Program to Improve Metropolitan Mobility
4. Saving Lives: A National Safe Mobility Program
5. Connecting America: A National Access Program for Smaller Cities and Rural Areas
6. Intercity Passenger Rail: A Program to Serve High-Growth Corridors by Rail
7. Environmental Stewardship: A Transportation Investment Program to Support a Healthy Environment
8. Energy Security: A Program to Accelerate the Development of Environmentally-Friendly Replacement Fuels
9. Federal Lands: A Program for Providing Public Access
10. Research, Development, and Technology: A Coherent Transportation Research Program for the Nation

1. REBUILDING AMERICA: A National Asset Management Program.

The first of the ten programs proposed by the Commission would put and keep the Nation's infrastructure in a state of good repair in the most efficient and cost-effective manner possible. More specifically, this program would address the portions of the surface transportation network in which there is a strong federal interest: federal-aid highways, including the Eisenhower System of Interstate and Defense Highways and the National Highway System, major transit assets, intercity passenger and freight rail lines, and network connectors between our modes that complete the overall system.

To assure the maximum effectiveness of federal capital investment support, states, local governments, and other entities accepting federal capital support must develop, fund, and implement a program of asset maintenance and support over the useful life of the asset that conforms to nationally accepted standards and that is independently audited.

2. FREIGHT TRANSPORTATION: A Program to Enhance U.S. Global Competitiveness.

The Commission believes that the federal government must return to its historic role of ensuring that the transportation needs of interstate commerce are met. The Commission supports the creation and funding of a national freight transportation program that would, in conjunction with states and metropolitan areas and consistent with a National Freight Transportation Plan, implement highway, rail, and other improvements that eliminate chokepoints and increase throughput.

This program could have significant impact upon the development of corridors like Ports-to-Plains that address the movement of freight.

-continued on page 7

Transportation for Tomorrow - continued from page 6

3. CONGESTION RELIEF: A Program for Improved Metropolitan Mobility.

The Commission recommends that a distinct program be established to fund projects that reduce congestion in our largest metropolitan areas (of 1 million or more in population).



4. SAVING LIVES: A National Safe Mobility Program.

The Commission recommends that the USDOT establish national safety standards, beginning with an ambitious but reachable goal to cut surface transportation fatalities in half from current levels by 2025.

5. CONNECTING AMERICA: A National Access Program for Smaller Cities and Rural Areas.



Updating the basic backbone of the surface transportation system must take into account those urban and rural communities, especially those that were not developed when the initial highway and rail infrastructure networks were created.

The Commission concluded that there are inadequate highway connections to fully develop the Nation's heartland communities, thus high-performing connections for the movement of freight and people are necessary to link the Nation's population and economic centers that currently do not have such connections.

This again is a program that could be specifically beneficial to the Ports-to-Plains Corridor.

6. INTERCITY PASSENGER RAIL: A Program to Serve High-Growth Corridors by Rail.

Passenger rail transportation is a key component of the Commission's vision for the future, and the Nation should pursue the development of a fast and reliable rail passenger network.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP: A Transportation Investment Program to Support a Healthy Environment.

The Commission believes that an Environmental Stewardship Program should be established and authorized at a level equivalent to 7 percent of the total funding for the federal surface transportation program.

8. ENERGY SECURITY: A Program to Accelerate the Development of Environmentally-Friendly Replacement Fuels.

The Commission recommends that a distinct transportation energy research and development program be authorized in conjunction with ongoing research programs of the U.S. Department of Energy to address these goals, at a level of \$200 million annually over the next decade.

9. FEDERAL LANDS: A Program for Providing Public Access.

The Commission believes the federal government should continue to be responsible for transportation access to this federal property.

-continued on page 8

Transportation for Tomorrow - continued from page 7

10. RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, & TECHNOLOGY: A Coherent Transportation Research Program for the Nation.

The federal government is best suited to monitor the vast scope of research activities underway across the Nation and the world, targeting funds to research gaps.

Each of these programs must coordinate with on another. Commission believes that coordination among the planning activities required for each of the programs will be essential. Coordination should begin as plans are developed at the local, state, and regional level, but the USDOT will need to take an active role in consolidating these separate plans into a national strategic plan.



The Commission Report is an in-depth look at the reform of the federal surface transportation program. It describes the consequences of inaction and future surface transportation investment requirements, with specific recommendations for a new beginning including recommendations to reform institutions and programs. Ports-to-Plains will continue to provide details of this report but if you would like to look at it yourself it is available at <http://www.transportationfortomorrow.org/>.



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Ports-to-Plains Investors in Progress

Municipal Investors	County Government Investors
<p>City of Abernathy - TX City of Amarillo - TX City of Big Spring - TX City of Boise City - OK Town of Clayton - NM City of Del Rio - TX City of Dumas - TX Town of Eads - CO City of Hale Center - TX City of Happy - TX City of Lamar - CO City of Lamesa - TX Town of Limon - CO City of Lubbock - TX City of New Deal - TX City of Plainview - TX City of Raton - NM City of San Angelo - TX Town of Springfield - CO City of Stratford - TX City of Sonora - TX City of Tahoka - TX City of Tulia - TX</p>	<p>Cimarron County - OK Colfax County - NM Elbert County - CO Hale County - TX Howard County - TX Kiowa County - CO Lincoln County - CO Lubbock County - TX Maverick County - TX Moore County - TX Prowers County - CO Sherman County - TX Sterling County - TX Sutton County - TX Tom Green County - TX Union County - NM Val Verde County - TX</p>
Economic Development Corp. Investors	Chamber of Commerce Investors
<p>Amarillo Economic Development Corporation - TX Adams County Economic Development - CO Canyon Economic Development Corp. - TX Metro Denver Economic Development Corp. - CO Dumas Economic Development Corporation - TX Lamesa Economic Development Corporation - TX Laredo Development Foundation - TX Lincoln County Economic Development - CO Lubbock Economic Development Alliance - TX Maverick County Development Corporation - TX Moore Development for Big Spring - TX Plainview/Hale County Industrial Foundation Inc. - TX Sonora Industrial Development - TX I-70 Regional Economic Advancement Partnership - CO</p>	<p>Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce - TX Cimarron County Chamber of Commerce - OK Dalhart Chamber of Commerce - TX Dumas/Moore County Chamber of Commerce - TX Eagle Pass Chamber of Commerce - TX Lamesa Chamber of Commerce - TX Lubbock Chamber of Commerce - TX San Angelo Chamber of Commerce - TX Stratford Chamber of Commerce - TX Sonora Chamber of Commerce - TX</p>
Other Investors	Conference Investors
<p>Amarillo College - TX Central 57 Importers & Exporters, Inc. - TX Colorado Motor Carriers Association - CO Ehler & Hettler, LLP - TX Lubbock Christian University - TX Panhandle Regional Planning Commission - TX Plainview Convention & Visitors Bureau - TX Prairie to Ports Gateway and Inland Port - SK, CANADA South Plains Association of Governments - TX Texas Tech University - TX TransPort - CO Wayland Baptist University - TX West Texas A&M University - TX</p>	<p>Del Rio Economic Dev. Corp. and City of Acuña Além International Management, Inc. Aquila The Bank & Trust City and County of Denver Colorado Asphalt Paving Association Colorado Contractors Association Colorado Office of Economic Development/Eastern Colorado Colorado Motor Carriers Association DMJM+HARRIS Dumas Economic Development Corporation Hugo Reed & Associates, Inc. Laredo Development Foundation Metro Denver Economic Development Corp. Panhandle Area Development District Parkhill, Smith & Cooper, Inc. Pate Engineers, Inc./Pate Transportation Partners Peoples Bank Reece Albert, Inc. State National Bank Stratford Grain Company Texas Good Roads Theodore Roosevelt Expressway Turner Collie & Braden Valero Energy Xcel Energy - Colorado Region Xcel Energy - Texas Region</p>