



ANOTHER SHORT-TERM SOLUTION

Late last week, Congress sent President Obama a second continuing resolution to continue funding federal highway and transit programs through December 18. This seven-week extension of the federal Surface Transportation Authorization Act (STAA) comes as the U.S. House and Senate continue to debate the length of time for an extension.

While Congress debates proposals varying from three to eighteen months, no progress has been made on the funding increases necessary to meet the goals of a new surface transportation authorization. As the November 2010 election grows nearer, chances of increasing federal fuel taxes diminish.

The second continuing resolution was again established with the lower funding level caused by the \$8.7 billion rescission of states' obligating authority which took effect September 30. This lowers the contract authority by \$1.5 billion.

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) informed the State Transportation Commission last week that the rescission combined with potential month-to-month continuing resolutions could create havoc on projects announced for FY 2010.

The Department expects letting delays and a program reduction of \$221 million due to the lower level of contract authority from the rescission. Production activities will need to be re-prioritized or delayed. The "Maintenance of Effort" for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) will be negatively impacted due to the production delays.

Although there is much we still do not know, one thing is certain: members of the U.S. House

and U.S. Senate will not consider a funding increase as part of an extension or reauthorization unless they know they have support from their constituents.

Over the past several years, road commissions have worked to educate legislators, the media and the community at large about the need for additional state transportation funding. The time has come to incorporate federal funding into that message.

If your road commission has federal projects slated for FY 2010, call your federal legislators and make sure they understand the importance of this project to your community.

Ask your Senators and Congressperson to support a continuing resolution or reauthorization that is based on original FY2009 funding levels, and does not include the impacts of the rescission. If the rescission is included, reducing apportionment levels by approximately 33%, project priorities will have to be realigned which could delay road and bridge repairs in your community.

If you experience a delay in letting bids for a FY 2010 project or are notified that your project may be delayed due to an adjustment in priorities, this is news the media, townships, and your community in general need to be aware of. Get your community involved. Encourage local elected officials and residents to call their U.S. Senators and Congressperson as well.

CRAM will continue to monitor federal funding scenarios. Please stay tuned to Legislative Updates for further details.

SHAKING MAILBOXES AROUND THE STATE

Who would have thought that one clever idea, submitted for recognition, would shake up an entire State? Our thanks to the Roscommon County Road Commission for the idea of Shake Your Mailbox Day and to Governor Jennifer Granholm for lending her support by declaring October 24, 2009 the first annual Shake Your Mailbox Day. By supporting this event with an official proclamation, the Governor helped raise awareness of some of the most common causes of damaged mailboxes in the winter.

We may never know the number of calls that will not be made this winter because someone repaired a weak mailbox BEFORE it was damaged. We do know that in at least 40 counties across the State residents are more informed on winter operations in their county. We know that in equally as many counties Postmasters and road commissions have opened new doors to communication and we know that it will not stop here.

If your county missed this year's Shake Your Mailbox Day, get on board for next year. Even if you missed the date, it is never too late to reach out to your residents and local postmaster.

Thank you for those counties that participated. We would also like to thank the United States Postal Service for their participation in this event. If you have any feedback on how we can improve this event, please contact Monica at the CRAM Office.



Creativity Surrounds Shake Your Mailbox Day

A wide range of techniques were used to inform residents about Shake Your Mailbox Day. Some ideas you can use next year—or even on your next project—include:

- * Including notes in township newsletters
- * Using programmable message boards
- * Taking an ad in your local paper
- * Television/radio public service announcements
- * Presentations to local civic groups

Shake Your Mailbox Day 2010 is Saturday, October 16.

We send our condolences to the families and friends of:

- * Jim Alderton, retired Marquette Commissioner
- * Jerry Ritchie, retired MDOT (Local Government Division) engineer
- * Everett Schram, retired Alcona Superintendent and Commissioner

JOB OPENINGS

The Kalamazoo County Road Commission is seeking candidates for the position of Permit Agent. The permit agent manages the permit process and serves as an inspector for construction projects. Reviews permits and construction plans for various projects within the County. Serves as a weighmaster to enforce state law regarding the weight and size of vehicles primarily during the seasonal weight restrictions. Responds to questions from contractors, developers, engineers, commission staff, and the general public regarding commission policies, procedures and specifications.

Qualified candidates must possess a high school diploma/GED, preferred minimum associates degree in related field. Preferred experience includes a minimum 2 years of survey or road construction/maintenance. Strong organizational, planning, customer service and communication skills. Must be willing to work as a team player. Computer skills including Microsoft Office, AutoCAD, FieldManager.

The position offers a competitive salary with benefits. Please send resume and salary requirements to the Kalamazoo County Road Commission 3801 E. Kilgore Road, Kalamazoo MI 49001 or email to info@krcr-roads.com by November 18, 2009. Full job description can be reviewed at www.kalamazoozooountyroads.com. No phone calls please. Candidates requiring confidentiality should so indicate. EOE

The Otsego County Road Commission is seeking qualified applicants for the position of Finance Director. This is a full-time management position. Applicants should possess, at a minimum, an associate's degree in accounting/finance/business or equivalent and at least five years work-related experience. Previous work experience in the field of public road transportation is highly desired.

The position of Finance Director operates under the general direction of the Managing Director of the Otsego County Road Commission. The Finance Director operates as the Chief Financial Officer of the Otsego County Road Commission and is responsible for all financial documentation as well as the preparation of annual Act 51 Reports, audits, the oversight of the processing of invoices, statements and accounts payable, and the preparation and recommendation of the annual budget to the Otsego County Road Commissioners. The Finance Director oversees the office of the Road Commission, as well as the preparation of all bank deposits and transmittals to the County Treasurer. The Finance Director is responsible to oversee payroll processing, all investments, credit/credit card accounts, end of month and end of year closing statements, and any all other duties and responsibilities as may be assigned by the Managing Director and/or the Otsego County Road Commissioners. The Finance Director is the Clerk of the Board and is responsible for attendance at all Otsego County Road Commission Board Meetings and the minutes of these meetings.

The salary will be commensurate with experience. The Otsego County Road Commission offers an excellent benefit package. Send a statement of interest, resume and salary information: Otsego County Road Commission; Attn. Michael A. Roper, Managing Director; P.O. Box 537; Gaylord, MI 49734. Applications will be accepted until 4 p.m. November 25, 2009. Candidates requiring confidentiality should so indicate. The Otsego County Road Commission is an equal opportunity employer.

2009 DIRECTORY CHANGES

GLADWIN New e-mail address is info@gladwinroads.com

CRASIF Janet Aemisegger's e-mail address should be crasifja@fontiernet.net

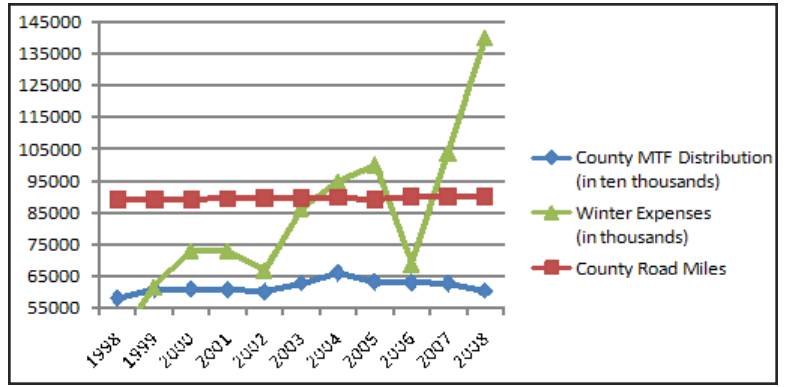
ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Change: Great Lakes Chloride, PO Box 68, Jones, MI 49061, ph. 269.476.1902

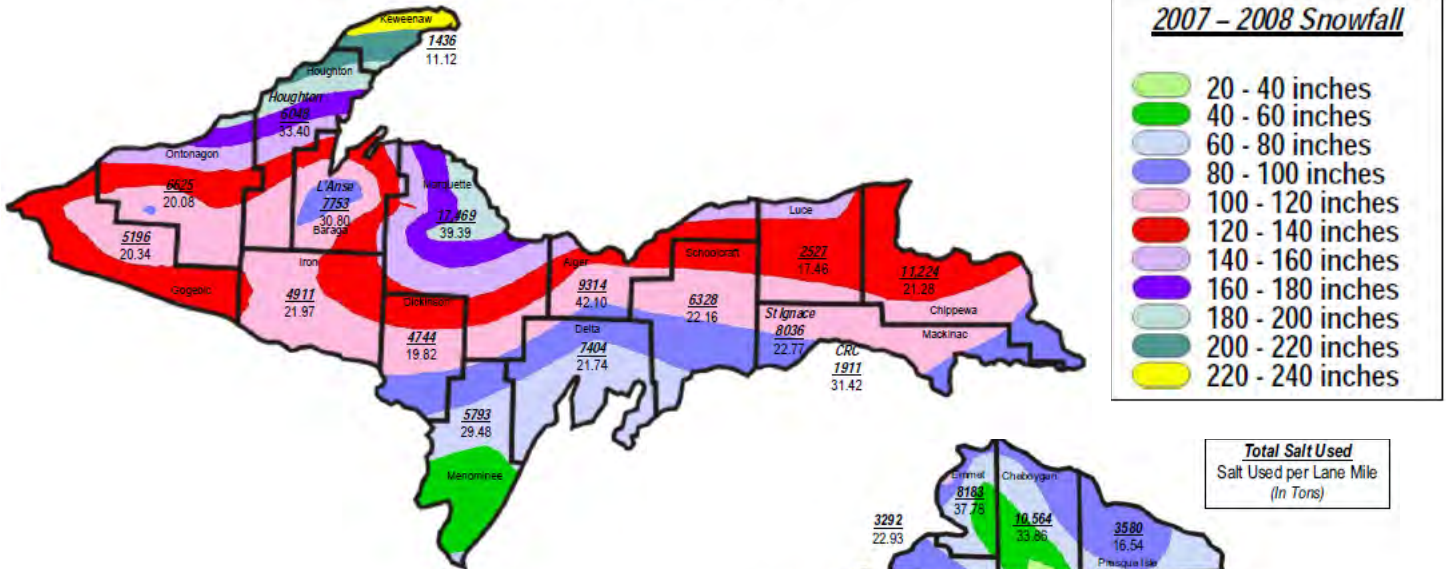
“There are four ways, and only four ways, in which we have contact with the world. We are evaluated and classified by these four contacts: what we do, how we look, what we say, and how we say it.” ~ Dale Carnegie ~

WINTER SETS IN, REVENUES SLIDE

After the short reprieve of a mild winter in 2006, Michigan has been battered by ever-increasing costs of winter maintenance. The graph at the right shows a relatively constant length of roads set against declining MTF distributions. The green line clearly indicates the skyrocketing costs of winter maintenance. The map below shows 2008 snowfall amounts and salt usage.

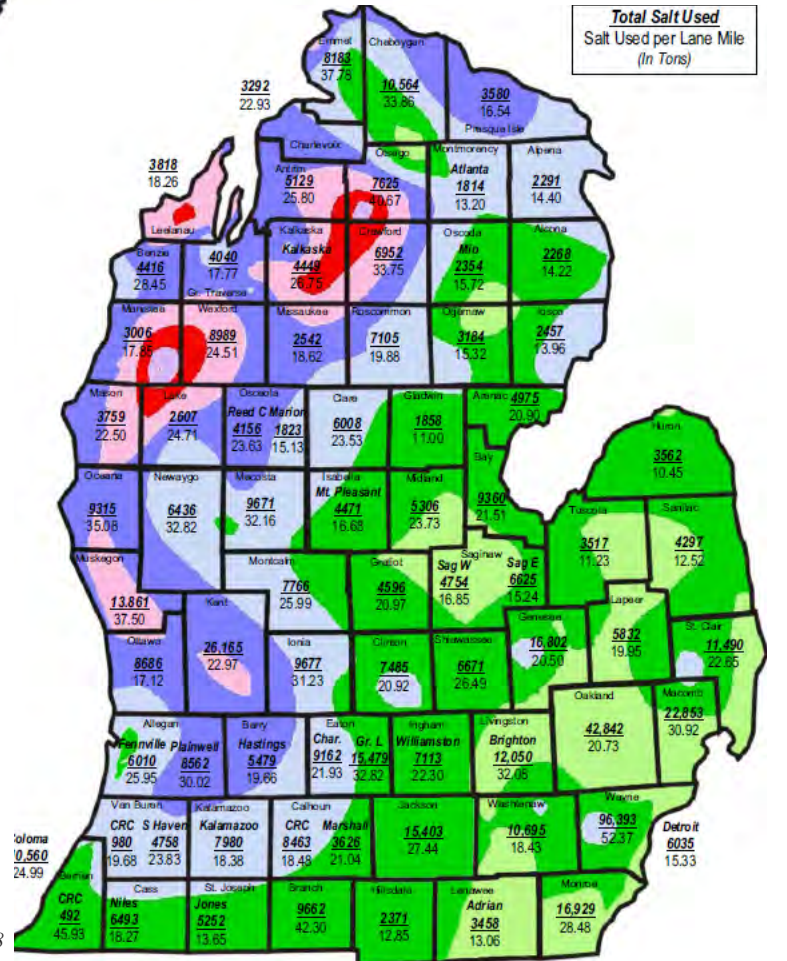


Salt Usage and Total Snowfall Amounts – FY 2008
County Road Commissions and MDOT Garages



The map does not, however, tell the entire story. MDOT reports that as of April 2009, year-to-date snowfall has exceeded average seasonal snowfall in every region. Twin Lakes, in the Superior Region, experienced nearly 100 inches more than the average while Niles, in the Southwest Region, saw about ten inches more than average in the same period. Across the State, to-date-snowfall was typically more than a foot higher than average.

Winter maintenance has been cut to the bone and Summer maintenance projects have been sacrificed in order to keep roads open for business. If the Winter of 2009-10 follows the trend of the last few years, Summer driving season may be challenging.



This report does not include municipality salt usage.
Snowfall data was obtained from NOAA.
Maps prepared by MDOT Divisions of Operations, Maintenance, September 2008

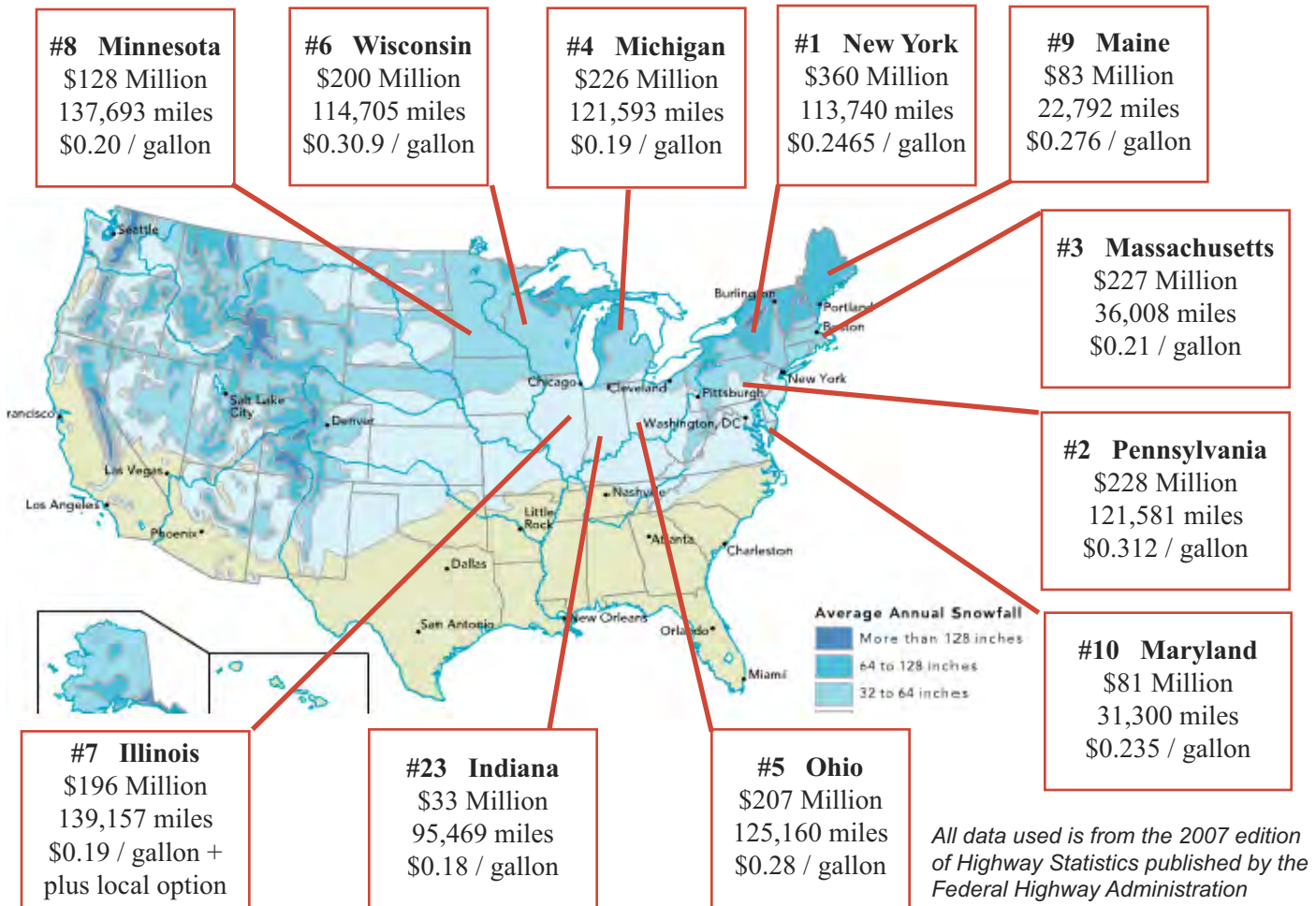
THE STATE OF WINTER MAINTENANCE

When set against its peers, Michigan ranks ninth in combined road mileage, eighth in population and yet it ranks fourth in spending for system-wide winter maintenance activities.

Only five states spend more than \$200 million dollars on winter maintenance each year. Of those states, only one has a gas tax of less than \$0.20/gallon while the average among these states is \$0.2477/gallon. Among these five states, the 50-year average rate of return on dollars sent to the Highway Trust Fund ranges from 143% for Massachusetts down to 94% in Michigan. Ohio, the only other donor State in the top five spenders, receives only 95% back compared to the group average of 115%.

Forty-two states spend less than \$100 million and of those twenty-five spend less than \$30 million. In fact, winter maintenance on the local and primary systems under the jurisdiction of Oakland County cost \$700,000 more than the State of Delaware spent clearing almost 4,000 more miles. While at the same time, eight UP counties (Chippewa, Delta, Gogebic, Iron, Marquette, Menominee, Ontonagon and Schoolcraft) are larger than Rhode Island. Combined the eight counties have about 300 more miles of primary and local roads under their jurisdiction, which is approximately 10 times the area of Rhode Island and receives at least twice as much snow, yet together they spent \$7.6 million on winter maintenance compared to \$13.4 million spent on the combined 6,510 miles of roads in Rhode Island. In fact, winter maintenance is so poorly funded that the warm weather state of Georgia (at \$973,000) spent more on winter maintenance than 36 Michigan counties did on their individual systems.

The map below represents average snowfall across the nation as reported by the National Weather Service. Each of the top ten spenders for winter maintenance are called out in text boxes indicating their rank and name, amount spent system-wide for winter maintenance, combined number of miles in their road systems, and the amount of tax imposed per gallon of gasoline. Also included is Indiana, which was the only Great Lakes State not ranking in the top ten for winter maintenance expenses.



ARTBA WEBINAR TO HELP TRANSPORTATION PROJECT COMMUNITY RELATIONS PROGRAMS

In today's hyper-active media and political environment every public infrastructure project has the potential to become a local "hot-button" issue—and mastering community relations and public outreach tactics is now as important as engineering and construction aptitude. To help industry professionals refresh these skills, and learn what works from the industry's best, the American Road & Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA) is offering a November 12 webinar from 12:30-1:30 p.m., EST.

"Building Effective Public Affairs & Community Relations Programs" is designed for project managers, communicators, corporate executives, safety professionals, human resources and risk management professionals and will be taught by two veteran transportation construction industry communicators, and include a brief refresher "media relations 101."

Featured at the event will be Joyce Watson, vice president of public relations for Oldcastle, Inc., and Lisa Wagman Glezer, client and public relations manager for G.A. & F.C. Wagman, Inc. ARTBA Director of Public Affairs Jeff Solsby will serve as moderator and lead the "media relations" section of the program.

G.A. & F.C. Wagman, a Pennsylvania highway/bridge contractor, has established an award-winning community, political and government engagement program to educate local legislators and the public about the positive impacts of transportation investment on the economy and quality of life in communities in which they operate. Wagman Glezer will explain how they do it, outline what benefits are provided for the company, and give you a "playbook" to use in your local operations.

Oldcastle Materials, the leading vertically-integrated supplier of aggregates, asphalt, ready-mixed concrete and paving supplies in the U.S., takes a pro-active approach to community relations. Their tactics include hosting open house sessions aimed at educating students and community leaders about how construction materials are used and their benefit to our economy and mobility. The firm also works in partnership with organizations like Wildlife Habitat Council and Habitat for Humanity as a means to build rapport with local leaders and demonstrate community involvement. Watson will offer tips to develop similar programs.

The cost is \$125 for ARTBA members and \$175 for non-members. Register in the "webinars" section of the "news and events" page at www.artba.org.

TRAFFIC SAFETY AWARD NOMINATIONS

Each year the Governor's Traffic Safety Advisory Commission (GTSAC) honors organizations, programs, and/or individuals by presenting awards for outstanding contributions to traffic safety in Michigan. This is your opportunity to be a participant in the key element of the awards program, that of nominating candidates. This is a chance to honor the best of Michigan's traffic safety community: people who are motivated to seek changes and improvement and who work effectively as an individual or as part of a team.

The form to nominate organizations or individuals who have made outstanding contributions to traffic safety in Michigan can be found at www.michigan.gov/msp under the Office of Highway Safety Planning >>> Governor's Traffic Safety Advisory Commission.

Individuals or organizations may be nominated by a person (including supervisor or employee) who is familiar with the activities for which the nominee is being considered. A person/organization may only be nominated in one category. No self nominations. However, a person may nominate a program, organization, or activity they are involved in.

Nominees must be a Michigan resident or an organization located in the state. All entries must be postmarked on or before November 13, 2009, and returned to the address listed in the middle of the last page. Entries received after this date will NOT be considered.

Entries will be judged by representatives of the GTSAC. The possibility exists that multiple awards may be presented in one area, as well as no awards in another. The GTSAC will present awards on March 31, 2010, at the Michigan Traffic Safety Summit in East Lansing.

VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED STABILIZE, BUT REVENUES ERODE

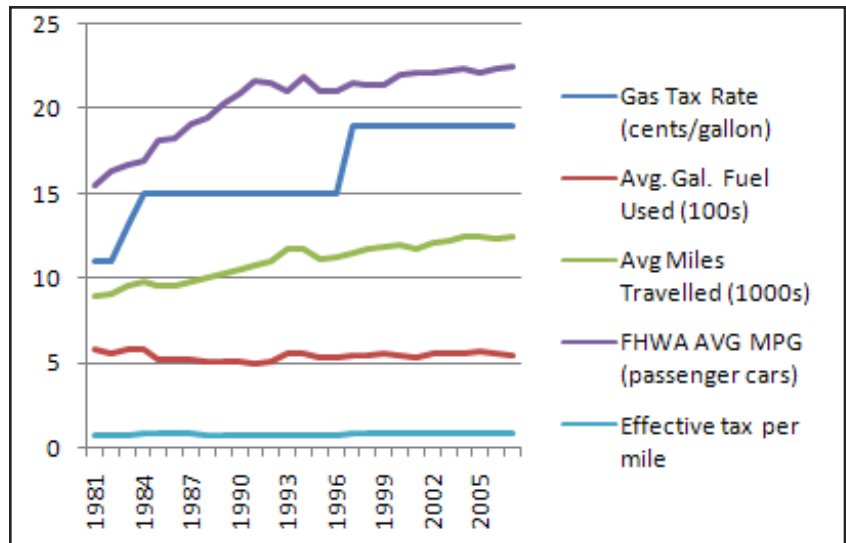
For the first time in a quite a while, the Federal Highway Administration announced a slight overall increase (0.7%) in the number of vehicle miles traveled nationwide. Although the report is good news, the North Central region (which includes Michigan) was down slightly at -0.2%. Some economists point to this overall increase as a sign that the economy may be leveling off as people resume their new normal routines.

While an increase in miles travelled may translate into increased fuel sales and therefore an increase in the revenue generated by fuel-based taxes, continued improvements in gas mileage may counter the effect. As most of us are aware, the Cash For Clunkers program was intended to not only spur the economy, but also to reduce our dependency on foreign oil. According to the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute, the 690,000 vehicles sold under this program resulted in an increase of more than 0.6 MPG in the average fuel efficiency of ALL 2,260,000 vehicles sold in July and August of 2009.

Cash For Clunkers appears to have accelerated a 10-year trend of higher efficiency vehicles. In October of 2007, the average fuel economy of new vehicles in this class was 20.2 MPG. By June of 2009 that average had increased to 21.4 MPG. While it is too early to know the long-term effects of the program, there is still cause for concern. Since 2000, the average MPG for light-duty vehicles had moved just 0.5MPG from 22.0 to 22.5 MPG in 2007.

The problem is that Michigan's 1997 gas tax increase barely returned the effective tax per mile to 1984 levels, and since 2000 the effective tax per mile has fallen. In fact the average driver in the average car paid just \$1.52 more on gas taxes to drive almost 1,000 more miles in 2007 than they drove in 1997.

In addition to the lower effective tax per mile rates, Michigan residents are buying less fuel. According to FHWA, the average vehicle in Michigan used 20 fewer gallons of fuel in 2007 than in 1984. In spite of using less fuel, the average vehicle traveled 2,600 more miles...each of which adds to the wear of our underfunded transportation systems.



Nomination Information for Best Practices and CRAMmy Awards is included with today's mailing to offices.

Nominations for either award are due to the CRAM Office by December 30, 2009



THE ROAD AHEAD



November

2010 Events

9 Southwestern Council
Harbor Steakhouse, Muskegon

11 CRAM Office closed

19 Paul Bunyan Council
Oceana Eagles Club, Hart

26-27 CRAM Office closed

December

7-9 ASMRC Annual Conference
Bavarian Inn Lodge, Frankenmuth

17 Vacationland Council
To be announced (Arenac hosting)

February

11-12 UPRBA Winter Meeting

March

9-11 CRAM Highway Conference
Causeway Bay Hotel, Lansing

June

16-17 UPRBA Summer Meeting
Keweenaw Mountain Lodge, Copper Harbor



2010 MTA EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE AND EXPO

Townships play an important role in local government and throughout the state they are important partners in local road projects. The 2010 Michigan Townships Association (MTA) Educational Conference & Expo in Grand Rapids, provides road commissioners and managing staff the opportunity to meet with township officials on their turf, and learn about the challenges they face.

The theme *Changing Times, Changing Townships* incorporates MTA's traditional workshops on legal matters, legislative issues and statutory duties with a new innovations track which provides information on the latest trends and challenges.

The County Road Association will again host a table at the Expo. We welcome any volunteers who are interested in helping us reach out to township officials. If you are interested in helping, please contact Monica Ware at the CRAM Office (mware@localroads.net or 517.482.1189, ext. 17) for more information.

The Conference will be held January 27-29, 2010 at the DeVos Place in Grand Rapids. The fee for full registration is \$235 for MTA members and \$320 for non-members. Additional details can be found on MTA's Web site at <http://www.michigantownships.org>.

TRANSPORTATION ASSET MANAGEMENT WORKSHOPS

Registrations are now being taken for two remaining Fall sessions of the Michigan Transportation Asset Management Workshop for LTAP.

Nov. 10, 2009 University Center
Gaylord

Nov. 11, 2009 Holiday Inn
Marquette

Complete information can be found at:
<http://michiganltap.org>

Register by email: ltap@mtu.edu or call
LTAP @ 906.487.2102.