



HELP CRAM STOP STATE PARK PASSPORT FEES

Some states are criticized for funding a road to nowhere. In stark contrast, Michigan is on the verge of funding remote destinations using the funding mechanism intended to provide for the roads leading to them.

This leaves a lingering question—If vehicle registration fees are increased to fund state parks, how will we fund the roads leading to these state parks—now and in the future?

The Michigan State Senate recently passed Senate Bills 388-389. These bills are now before the House Great Lakes and Environment Committee, where the Chair, State Rep. Rebekah Warren (D-Washtenaw), has pledged to take action on the bills.

Despite the strong opposition of CRAM, the MI Chamber, Michigan Infrastructure and Transportation Association (MITA), the Michigan Department of State, and other transportation groups; this legislation appears to be on the fast track with members seeing it as a simple fix to the funding for state parks and not understanding the impact it will have on transportation funding.

The Grand Rapids Press and Detroit News have both editorialized in support of the “optional” additions to vehicle registration fees.

Supporters of this legislation point to the growth in Michigan’s tourism industry and the more than \$300 million in accumulated infrastructure needs at state parks, and downplay the concerns of transportation advocates.

The same legislators who tell us “now is not the

time” to increase vehicle registration fees to fund roads supported this legislation. If this legislation passes, it decreases the chance that vehicle registration fees will be increased to fund transportation, not just now but in the future. A provision in Senate Bill 389 will index the state park passport fee to inflation (consumer price index); yet another concept too controversial to apply to road funding.

We need to help legislators understand—

Michigan could have the best state parks system in the nation, but it does no good if the roads leading to them are closed!

According to the legislatively created and gubernatorial appointed

Transportation Funding Task Force, Michigan’s transportation infrastructure is underfunded by as much as \$3 to \$9 billion annually.

Both state parks and roads have their own user fee based funding mechanism. The Michigan Constitution dedicates vehicle registration fees for transportation purposes. When we need additional road funding, we advocate increasing our user fees, not piggybacking on others.

Please take a moment today to write or call your State Representative and ask him or her to oppose this legislation. This is especially important if your legislator serves on the House Great Lakes and Environment Committee.

Call Toll-Free 888-719-3087

Also, please consider submitting a letter to the editor to your local newspaper, the Grand Rapids Press and Detroit News. Sample letters are available at the Drive MI Web site, www.drivemi.org.

House Great Lakes and Environment Members: Rebekah Warren, Judy Nerat, Tim Bledsoe, Kate Ebli, Deb Kennedy, Gabe Leland, Mark Meadows, Sarah Roberts, Dan Scripps, Arlan Meekhof, Kevin Daley, Joe Haveman, Rick Jones, Phil Pavlov, and Wayne Schmidt. (Bold= majority party)

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION MEMBERSHIPS

Information was recently mailed to all county road commission offices regarding 2010 rates for national organization memberships. CRAM offers group membership rates for the American Public Works Association (APWA), the American Road & Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA), and the National Association of County Engineers (NACE). Rates for 2010 are as follows: APWA, \$116 per member; ARTBA, \$160 per member; and NACE, \$120 per member.

Due to a 2006 amendment to the CRAM Constitution and Bylaws, CRAM will again provide one NACE membership as part of each member CRC's service charge payment. If the individual named by you as your 2009 NACE member is no longer with your CRC, indicate on the form mailed to you who will replace them as your 2010 NACE member.

If you are interested in renewing your membership or joining any of these organizations, let your CRC office know so that your name can be included on their list when it is forwarded to CRAM. Membership information must be returned with payment to the CRAM office by January 1, 2010.

**“SELF-CONFIDENCE IS THE
FIRST REQUISITE TO GREAT
UNDERTAKINGS.”**

~~SAMUEL JOHNSON

CRAM BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Every year, there is interest expressed by CRAM members as to how one goes about getting their name considered for inclusion on the ballot for election to the Board of Directors.

Under the Association's Constitution and Bylaws, the CRAM Board consists of 16 elected members and the most recent eligible Past President. Of those 16, 4 members are elected by their respective sectional associations for a term of 1 year; and 3 members are elected from each sectional association for staggered 3-year terms. The 3 from each sectional association are elected by the Association as a whole from a slate of candidates drawn up by the Nominating Committee for the statewide ballot.

Serving on the CRAM Board requires time and dedication. The members of your council/sectional association may consider your attendance and participation in council/sectional events—along with your experience and length of service—when making the decision to nominate you.

If you think you would like to serve on the CRAM Board, talk to members of your council and sectional and submit your name to the Nominating Committee for consideration.

Nominating Committee Members are:

Chr.	Steven M. Puuri	Washtenaw
V.C.	Dirk Heckman	Mackinac
	Paula Mack-Crouchman	Macomb
	Gerald C. Peterson	Manistee

2010 NATIONAL WORK ZONE AWARENESS WEEK DATES ANNOUNCED

The 2010 National Work Zone Awareness Week (NWZAW) will be held April 19-23, 2010 with the national kickoff event in New York City. The theme of the 2010 NWZAW and the exact time, date, location and other details about the national kickoff will be announced soon.

For more information visit http://www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/wz/outreach/wz_awareness.htm

LISTSERV INFORMATION

The CRAM Listservs continue to serve as a valuable tool for transferring information between road commissions. We thank you for your participation and encourage you to check it out if you have not yet.

For current members of the Listserv, you can change your name, e-mail address, other settings, and discover more information about the members of the list using the links provided below. New members can also subscribe to the lists (subject to administrator approval) from these links.

Attachments are becoming more of an issue for the Listserv platform. Here are a couple pointers related to posting:

- Send only plain text e-mails. Do not include stationery, rich text formatting, or HTML formatting. These items will be scrubbed by the Listserv and may also delay your post.
- Please do not post attachments to the Listservs. Attachments are not handled well by the Listserv platforms. If you wish to include something as an attachment, please e-mail to Tom Eldred at teldred@localroads.net with the body of the text you would like included in the message and we will attach a better link to your document. Alternatively, you can send the file and we can send you the link which you could include in your message.
- For those attachments that do get sent, you may notice that they sometimes get scrubbed. This is a way to manage the growth of the files used by the Listserv archives. If you see a message about an attachment being scrubbed, a multiline link to the file is included at the bottom of the message.

Listserv User Management Pages

To subscribe to, or to manage existing, Listserv accounts visit the respective page listed below. You may also have a password reminder sent from these pages:

- <http://bsd02.samsa.com/mailman/listinfo/cram-cogitate-users-self-help>
- <http://bsd02.samsa.com/mailman/listinfo/cram-commissioners>
- <http://bsd02.samsa.com/mailman/listinfo/cram-engineering>
- <http://bsd02.samsa.com/mailman/listinfo/cram-finance-hr>
- <http://bsd02.samsa.com/mailman/listinfo/cram-negotiating-trunkline>
- <http://bsd02.samsa.com/mailman/listinfo/cram-pr>
- <http://bsd02.samsa.com/mailman/listinfo/cram-precision-users-self-help>
- <http://bsd02.samsa.com/mailman/listinfo/cram-purchasing>
- <http://bsd02.samsa.com/mailman/listinfo/cram-tech>

You may have two or sometimes three links to choose from (depending on whether the sender included stationery or used HTML/RTF e-mail. If you do attach—and **please do not**—a file, make certain you identify the name of the file you are attaching to make it easier for your peers to decode the links.

2009 DIRECTORY CHANGES

BERRIEN Izzy DiMaggio, Commissioner, 6410 N. M-63, Coloma, MI 49038,
replaces Vick Kinzler

CRAWFORD Delete P.O. Box

SAGINAW Ryan Whiteherse, P.E., Director of Engineering, replaces Adam Ball

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Change: **Bit-Mat Products of Michigan, Inc.**, new address is 401 Tiernan Rd., Bay City MI 48706

Reinstate: **Contech Construction Products**, 22600 Hall Rd. Ste. 202, Clinton Twp. MI 48036
Ph. 586.469.4240

Delete: Ledy Design Group

THE COST OF PAYING LATER

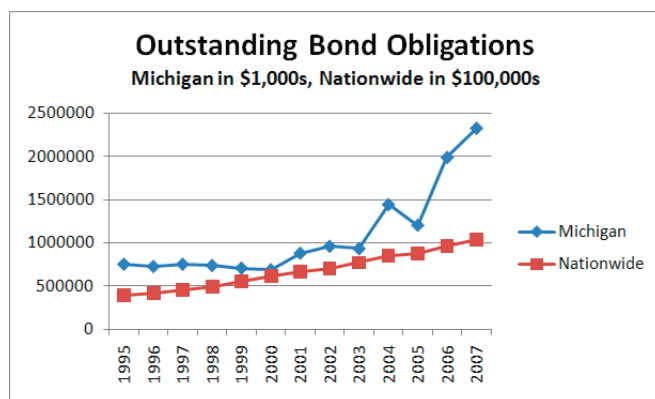


Michigan's transportation infrastructure is reaching a critical juncture. Decades--almost a century in fact-- of underfunding and overuse threaten to bring the system to its knees if something is not done to resolve the problem soon.

In recent times bonding has been the band-aid holding our systems together. In 2007, Michigan was one of only 20 states that increased the amount of bonds outstanding. Seventeen states found it prudent to reduce their outstanding obligations while the balance held the line steady.

Michigan has the twelfth highest amount of outstanding bonds (\$2.3 billion). The outstanding obligations are equivalent to 95% of the system-wide capital outlays for 2007 (\$2.45 billion). Or stated another way, outstanding bonds exceeded 68% of the entire fiscal year 2007 transportation appropriation. Debt service on these notes represented approximately 2.5% of the appropriation.

The trend of borrowing funds for transportation projects rather than fixing the funding mechanisms is having a negative effect on our roads. In 2007 (the most recent year for which data is available), Michigan paid more than \$84.8 million dollars in interest on transportation-related bonds. This amount is larger than the MTF payments to any single county and is greater than the combined annual MTF payments to the 62 counties receiving the lowest MTF payments.

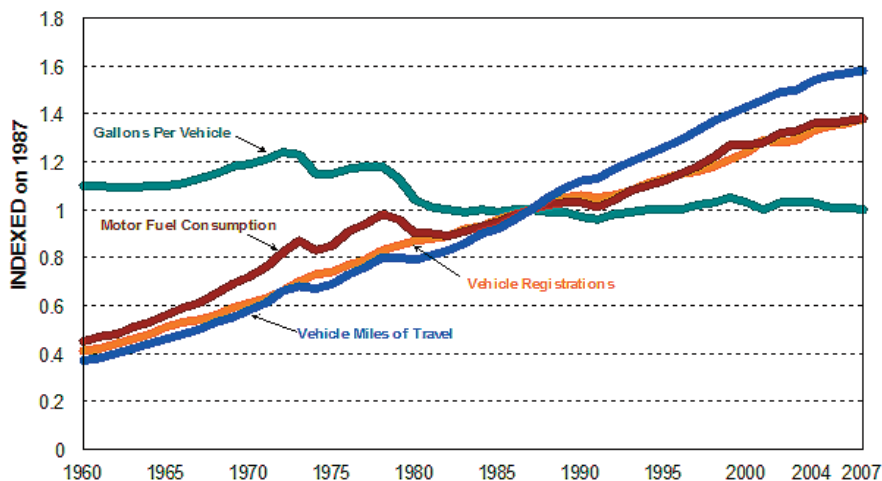


For many of us, it is common financial wisdom to stop borrowing when your expenses exceed your income. Yet for nearly a century, we have passed the burden of today's roads to our children and their children through bonding or neglecting the needs of our system. In the days of gas prices bouncing 20-30 cents a day, let's break the long-standing tradition of passing the buck and fund transportation. Nine cents spread over three years (three cents per year) and diesel parity would go a long way towards resolving the backlog of needs. The savings in auto repairs alone would result in a net increase in funds available for Michigan citizens...and turn the tide for our system.

For more than 20 years (see chart below) the number of vehicles and miles travelled have steadily outpaced the amount of fuel used. Increasing the fuel tax and allowing for inflationary indexing is what it will take to put Michigan back on the road to success.

Call, write and visit your legislators and educate them on the impacts that the unfunded needs are having on your system. Additionally, educate your friends and family on these needs. Encourage them to take action.

The number to call to be connected to your legislators is 888.719.3087. Call today and call once for each of the representatives and senators in your district. Your future is on the line.

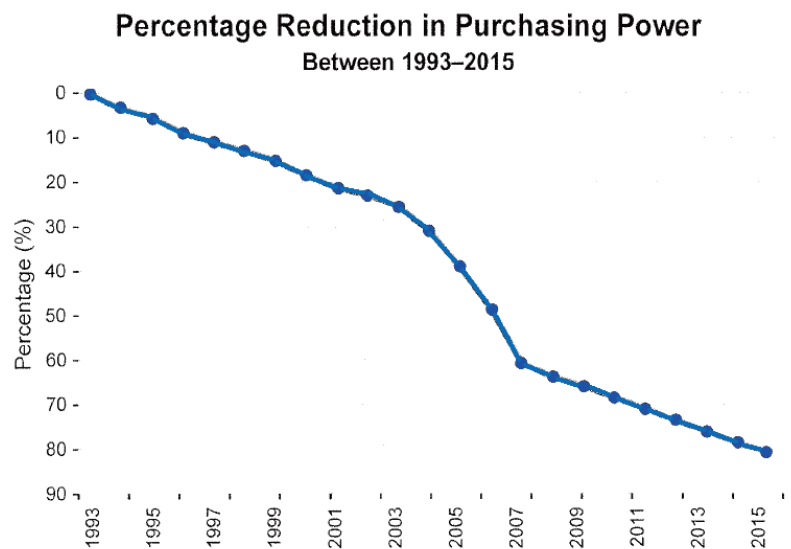


FEWER DOLLARS BUYING LESS

In May 2009, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials released their report *Rough Roads Ahead*. This forty-page report noted the conditions and needs of the nation's transportation system. That report estimated that nationwide, transportation needs were less than 50% funded at current investment levels. The range of studies referenced indicate system funding needs between \$130 and \$240 billion annually, while total spending in 2006 was a mere \$78 billion nationwide.

The report notes that "maintaining a road in good condition is easier and less expensive than repairing one in poor condition. Costs per lane mile for reconstruction after 25 years can be more than three times the cost of preservation treatments over the same 25 years and can extend the expected service life of the road for another 18 years."

Here in Michigan, the situation is dire. Declining Michigan Transportation Fund (MTF) revenues continue to couple with a historic underfunding. We have never fully funded the maintenance needs of our roads. Even the last fuel tax increase in 1997 was a compromise that funded only a minor portion of the system's annual needs. Each year less than half the required maintenance on county road systems is funded. Not only have these non-funded needs continued to deteriorate, the costs of delayed maintenance are amplified by soaring construction costs—asphalt up 70%, concrete 36%, steel 105% and diesel fuel 305%—during the past five years which have eroded the buying power of transportation dollars. In the report *Rough Roads Ahead*, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) estimates that the overall purchasing power of a transportation dollar will have declined by 80% from 1993 to 2015.



The solution is not more bonding, and it cannot be delaying more maintenance. For more than 50 years we have continued to push our infrastructure to the edge. Now is the time to take action to stop the bleeding. Jobs have been lost as factories leave for better transportation infrastructure. Wallets and pocketbooks statewide bleed from the costs of excessive vehicle maintenance caused by deteriorated roads. Public safety, education and commerce feel the impact of closed and restricted bridges...and many of those players are behind the move to increase funding for road maintenance.

The missing piece is you. We need—Michigan's future needs—your participation in the drive for a funding increase. We know that not many of you have contacted your legislators. It is in fact apparent that not many of you have. When you contact your legislators, please be sure to include Ed Noyola on those contacts either as a carbon copy or by phone. Ed can reinforce your message, or help you present it. Only together can we move Michigan forward.

In 1996 The Road Information Program (TRIP) estimated that Michigan motorists paid an additional \$121 per year in vehicle maintenance costs as a result of unmet road maintenance needs. That figure had risen to \$370 for 2007 making Michigan the twelfth most expensive state for vehicle repairs due to the lack of adequate funding for road maintenance.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS PAGE DEBUTS

We are pleased to announce the addition of a *Frequently Asked Questions* page to our Web site.

The page is a compilation of questions related to road commission operations where answers can be provided in a general fashion. Questions that have road commission specific answers are either avoided or users are directed to check with their road commission.

Topics include paved road maintenance, gravel/dirt roads, signage, winter maintenance and roadside maintenance. This document is intended to be a living resource—meaning that we will update it as new question/answer sets are identified.

Visit www.micountyroads.org to check out the information. You are welcome to use any of the questions and answers on your Web site, or to link to our page.

If you have suggestions for questions, or other comments, send them to Tom Eldred by e-mail to: teldred@localroads.net.

WINTER NOTE

As winter descends upon us, we would like to take a moment to remind you that the section of law that prohibits the piling of snow onto a roadway or in such a way as to obstruct the line of sight is MCL 257.677a. Complete text of this section can be found online at www.michiganlegislature.org by searching for the MCL section number.

MIS/CRAM

With fiscal year 2010 under way for many road commissions, it is time to remind everyone of the need to add your county's data to the MIS/CRAM system. A few road commissions have yet to enter the data for 2008 and 2007. Please do so at your earliest convenience. Those counties with 2009 data outstanding will be listed in next July's CRAM News. Thank you to those who have entered your data in a timely manner.

NEW ASSET MANAGEMENT COUNCIL WEB SITE

The Transportation Asset Management Council is proud to announce the release of their new Web site, which can be reached at the following link: www.michigan.gov/tamc. The new Web site is intended to be more user friendly for both the general public, as well as the 600+ Michigan road agencies completing annual reporting requirements via the Investment Reporting Tool as well as Act 51 Reporting. All Council meetings, minutes and presentations will be available on the site and hopefully easier to access. Please test out the new site and give them some feedback. Additional improvements will be coming early in 2010.

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact Brian Sanada – Asset Management Coordinator at 517.373.2220.

MDOT ASKS FOR COMMENTS ON TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM PERFORMANCE REPORT

For the first time, MDOT is putting information on the overall condition and performance of the state transportation system online and is looking for feedback from the public. Called the Transportation System Performance Report, the data is packaged like a Web site to make it easy to review and drill down for more details. The report is found at www.michigan.gov/mdotpr and provides performance data for such areas as: Trunkline Bridges, Trunkline Pavement, Trunkline Highway-Railroad Crossings, Airports, Passenger Transportation, and Carpool Parking Lots

There is a "Send Feedback" button that makes it easy to e-mail MDOT a comment or question about the report.

MDOT plans to update and add to the report on a regular basis.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING COUNTED: 2010 CENSUS TRANSLATES TO FEDERAL FUNDING IN MICHIGAN



Deputy Secretary of Commerce Dennis F. Hightower and Lieutenant Governor John D. Cherry, Jr. kicked off Michigan's 2010 census campaign, "It's in Our Hands, Michigan." Cherry was named Michigan's complete count chair earlier this year to oversee the state's census efforts. Michigan is working with state agencies to promote the census through communications they have with local communities and constituencies.

"It is vitally important that all residents get counted in the 2010 census," Cherry said. "Being counted translates to \$1,000 every year for our roads, schools, health care, housing and poverty relief."

Michigan also has a unique problem in that it has more snowbirds than many other states, with an average of 2.1 percent of Michigan's residents identified as part-year residents. Most of Michigan's part-year residents have their permanent homes in Michigan and spend the smaller part of the year in another state, which means they need to be counted in Michigan.

"Michigan residents who spend a smaller portion of the year at a residence in another state should be sure to fill out the census form for Michigan," Cherry added. "There are dramatic financial impacts for Michigan, and we need to be sure that our residents are counted here and not in another state."

Quick facts regarding the 2010 Michigan census:

- In Michigan, for every person NOT counted, our state loses \$10,000 (\$40,000 for a family of four) to other states over the course of 10 years.
- The census also determines reapportionment and redistricting of congressional, state and local representation.
- It is estimated that 24,000 people will be hired at a pay range of \$11.25-\$19.50 per hour.
- Michigan would not have lost a congressional seat after the 2000 census if its snowbirds had been counted in the right place.
- Because so many of Michigan's snowbirds were counted in the wrong place by the 2000 census, roughly \$200 million of federal funds are spent in other states each year instead of in Michigan, which adds up to \$2 billion over the course of a decade.

For more information on the 2010 Michigan census, please visit www.michigan.gov/census2010.

Nominations for Best Practices and CRAMmy Awards are due in the CRAM Office by December 30, 2009



THE ROAD AHEAD



December

- 7-9 ASMRC Annual Conference
Bavarian Inn Lodge, Frankenmuth
- 17 Vacationland Council
K of C Hall, AuGres
- 24-25 CRAM Office Closed
- 31 CRAM Office Closed

To post job openings or to include other items in CRAM News, contact Tom Eldred at the CRAM Office. Openings/information should be sent electronically to teldred@localroads.net no later than Wednesday of the last full week of the month before publication (i.e., openings to be included in the 1-8-10 edition would be due not later than 12-30-09).

“For example, we need to offer local jurisdictions greater flexibility in determining how federal transportation dollars are spent. After all, you understand what makes your communities special – and you know better than Washington how transportation can play to your strengths.”

Ray LaHood
US Secretary of Transportation

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS
FROM ALL OF US
AT CRAM!**

2010 Events

January

- 1 CRAM Office Closed

February

- 11-12 UPRBA Winter Meeting
- 23-25 County Engineers’ Workshop
Soaring Eagle Inn and Conference Center,
Mt. Pleasant
- 25 General Policy Committee
Soaring Eagle Inn and Conference Center,
Mt. Pleasant

March

- 9-11 CRAM Highway Conference
Causeway Bay Hotel, Lansing

April

- 11-13 Commissioners’ Seminar
Holiday Inn West Bay, Traverse City
- 25-29 NACE Annual Conference
Fort Worth, TX

May

- 18-20 Finance and Human Resource Bus. Seminar
Holiday Inn of Marquette, Marquette

June

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

September

- 8-10 NMARC Annual Conference
Shanty Creek Resort, Bellaire
- 29- Oct. 1 SAM Annual Conference
Kewadin Hotel & Conv. Ctr., Sault Ste. Marie

December

- 6-8 ASMRC Annual Conference
Soaring Eagle, Mt. Pleasant