

# National Association of County Engineers

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## NACE UPDATE

The almost bi-weekly newsletter for Board members & Committee Chairs

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(Note: Sources of information include the AASHTO Journal, NACo staff, Senate and House publications, the Federal Highway Administration, and other association news journals)

### **NACE Board of Directors Approves Legislative Priorities/Positions**

The National Association of County Engineers (NACE) Board of Directors at the July 14, 2007 meeting at the NACo annual conference in Richmond VA voted unanimously to propose and strongly support the following priority issues.

**1. Support an aggressive Safety Program for making local roads safer through a “Toward Zero Fatalities” policy goal which focuses on the reduction of fatalities and serious injuries over the next transportation authorization by one-half. It is noted that in 2005 43,433 fatalities and 2 million injuries occurred on our highways. 58% of the fatalities were roadway departures of which 80% of those were on rural roads (90% 2-lane). More than 50% of the fatal crashes occur at night. 30% of all fatal crashes were speed related of those 86% were non-interstate. In this effort to achieve “Toward Zero Fatalities” the below specific legislative actions are recommended:**

**o Improve the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) and the ability of greater access to and assured funding from it for local road safety improvements.**

Improving the HSIP should build on the success of the Safe Routes to School Program and should have a dedicated traffic safety professional in every DOT to assist implementation with federal safety funds for low cost safety improvements on low volume roadways and promote the use of HSIP funding for appropriate countermeasures deployed to reduce lane departure crashes and intersection crashes. We encourage the continuation of collecting crash data on all public roads and encourage investment on rural roadways regardless of the availability of state specific data. Nationwide data documents that over 50% of fatal crashes occur on rural roadways and we would encourage the HSIP to dedicate a minimum of 50% of the formula allocation to a central safety fund in each DOT to target investments on rural roadways with the highest fatality rate.

**o Support the continuation of the High Risk Rural Road Program (HRRR) and recommend higher levels of funding. A \$1 billion program is recommended over the authorization.**

**o Implement Project Streamlining for Low Cost Safety Improvement Projects.**

FHWA needs to modify regulations regarding the ability to access federal aid dollars for low cost safety improvement projects on local roads that do not involve capacity increases, acquisition of real estate, and are under \$100,000 in value. The current project review and approval system is prohibitive for small projects at the local level with limited staff to efficiently access available federal aid dollars. Regulatory and procurement relief is needed so local road professionals can execute safety improvement projects in a timely manner.

**2. Preserve and enhance the set aside for Federal Highway Bridge Replacement and Rehabilitation Program (HBRRP). Raise the current limit of a minimum of 15% for off-system bridges to a new minimum limit of 25% or greater if the State DOT and State Association representing local interests mutually agree (formally) to another method.**

**3. Support Congressional action now for legislation to raise the federal gas tax by 3 cents to avoid a cut in the FY 2009 highway program. Long term in the next reauthorization the federal gas tax should be raised an additional 7 cents to achieve a \$73 billion program by 2015. NACE would consider supporting other alternative methods to increase federal revenues to meet the above goals. NACE opposes the use of rescissions of unobligated highway contract authority as a means to offset highway related or non highway related budget activities.**

The above are priority issues. Other issues are noted below.

- **Revise section 406(a) of the 1993 Department of Transportation Appropriations Act that required the Secretary of Transportation to revise the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices to include a standard for minimum level of retroreflectivity that must be maintained for traffic signs and pavement markings. These retroreflectivity levels should not be published as part of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. Instead agencies should establish a process to provide reasonably maintained nighttime visibility of traffic signs and pavement markings. Signs and pavement markings that do not provide reasonably maintained nighttime visibility should be replaced within a reasonable time.**

Instead the law should be changed to allow agencies to establish a management process to provide reasonably maintained nighttime visibility of traffic control devices. This process could use one or more of the following methods:

Nighttime inspections  
Sign and markings management system  
Sign Life Analysis  
Other methods as appropriate.

- **Expansion of funding support for the Local Technical Assistance Program, which is included in the Technology Deployment and Education Budget of FHWA. Raise funding from present \$11 million per year to \$15 to \$20 million a year from FY 2010 to 2015.**
- **Recommend support for the principals contained in H.R. 3611, the Metropolitan Congestion Relief Act.**

- **Remain opposed to any federal efforts to change the definition of the Clean Water Act from navigable waters to “waters of the United States.”**
- **Remain opposed to issuance by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) of any standard or any other official guidance on performance measurement.**
- **Support greater use of automated traffic law enforcement.**
- **Support the use of motorcycle safety programs.**
- **Support the increase use of renewable and alternative fuels programs as long as such programs are not advanced at the expense of State and local highway agencies.**
- **Oppose any increases in vehicle size and weights as part of the next reauthorization unless set-aside funding is provided for the improvement of all roads.**

### **Non-Compliance Areas Would Soar Under Tighter Ozone Standards**

Tougher limits on the principal ingredient in smog – ground-level ozone – would place hundreds of U. S. counties into “non-compliance” status, according to news reports on the proposal released by the EPA last week. The current maximum ozone level is 0.084 parts per million (ppm). The change would reduce it to 0.07 to 0.075 parts per million, still higher than the 0.06 ppm level called for by health advocates. The new standard was proposed by EPA after a court order mandating that new standards be considered. EPA is to release an impact analysis of its proposal in a few weeks that will detail health benefits and economic costs. Following 90 days of public comment, the agency is expected to set its target number for ozone by March 12, 2008. The change, if adopted, would be the first EPA recommendation since 1977 affecting ground-level ozone. EPA monitors 639 counties nationwide, and says 104 of them are out of compliance with the current standard. If the standard went to 0.075 ppm, 398 counties would be out of compliance, and if it went to 0.070 ppm, 533 counties would be out of compliance.

### **AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety Call for Proposals**

The AAA Safety Foundation has put out a call for research proposals. For those of you with active research programs, please let them know if you are planning any relevant activities and/or see any opportunities for collaboration. Also, even if you aren't part of an organization that conducts research, they would request receipt of any suggestions from you! Below are links to solicitations for two of their four long-term emphasis areas: Senior Safety and Mobility and Safety Culture.

- **Senior Safety and Mobility Workshop**. Solicitation for concept papers/presenters and project manager. Due date is August 1, 2007
- **Improving Traffic Safety Culture in the United States, Seeking Research; Recommendations for 2008-2009**, Open deadline but preference for ideas received before October 1st.

The AAA Foundation is always open to new ideas for promising research. Thus, brief descriptions of proposed research are always welcomed; however, they cannot guarantee that they will fund any new projects outside of the areas noted above in 2008.

### **National Infrastructure Financing Commission Addresses Modal Funding Structures**

The National Surface transportation Financing Commission this week received a briefing on highway, transit, and rail funding structures and challenges, including the expected shortfall in the Highway Trust Fund (HTF). Jack Basso, AASHTO, told the commission that annual revenues to the HTF “are not declining”. He and Gary Maring of Cambridge Systematics said the problem facing the highway account of the HTF is that Congress authorized and appropriated program funding beyond anticipated revenues. Basso and Maring also pointed out that inflation has eroded the purchasing power of land, materials and services. By 2015, Basso said, inflation will have reduced the purchasing power of Consumer Price Indexed (CPI) Highway Trust Fund dollars in 1995 by 70 percent. Without Congress taking any corrective action, the highway account will fall short by as much as \$630 million in cash in FY 2009 and as much as \$5.8 billion in FY 2010. In the near term and to avoid a cut in the FY2009 highway program, the current 18.4 cent federal tax would have to be raised the equivalent of 3 cents. In the longer term and to achieve a \$73 billion highway program by 2015, the federal gas tax would have to be raised by an equivalent of an additional 7 cents in 2010. Another long term option to increase revenues is to index the fuel tax to annual increases in the CPI, which would raise \$82 billion for the highway account in 2021.

### **Mark Your Calendar for October 9-12, 2007, Fort Lauderdale, Fl and Attend the National Traffic Management & Work Zone Safety Conference**

If interested contact information on scholarships for government employees is available. Contact Lisa Kelley McCluskey, Communications and Clearinghouse Manager, LTAP/TTAP Clearinghouse, American Road and Transportation Builders Association 202 289-4434.

### **Job Opening Road Safety Audit Program Manager – State and Local Programs**

The Federal Highway Administration Office of Safety is seeking an enthusiastic, energetic, talented person to identify, develop and deliver highway safety programs and products. These programs, including Road Safety Audits, will help reduce the number and severity of highway crashes on all road types, including locally owned rural roads.

You will provide technical support and technology transfer, develop and interpret standards, regulations, policy, procedures and guidelines to integrate safety effectively into the national highway program. In particular, you will specifically tailor program activities to help improve highway safety in the US by providing technical, engineering and policy assistance to FHWA field offices, state and local agencies, and other internal and external customers to implement Road Safety Audits and other highway safety programs. You will have the opportunity to coordinate with experts with a wide range of knowledge and actively participate in implementing highway safety programs, including data needs, selection and evaluation of projects, and interpretation of Federal laws and regulations.

This position, reporting to headquarters, could be physically located in any of the following locations: Washington DC, Atlanta GA, Baltimore MD, Columbus OH, Richmond VA, Sterling VA or Trenton NJ.

Questions can be directed to Beth Alicandri, Director Office of Safety Programs at 202-366-6409 or John Dewar, State and Local Programs Team Leader at 202-366-2218.

This GS 13/14 Transportation Specialist position closes on 13 August 2007 and is posted on USAJobs.

<http://jobsearch.usajobs.opm.gov/getjob.asp?JobID=60004041&AVSDM=2007%2D07%2D16+00%3A00%3A06&Logo=0&FedEmp=N&sort=rv&vw=d&brd=3876&ss=0&FedPub=Y&q=safety+fhwa&rad=100&zip=20590>

Please note: this link takes you to the job announcement for the Washington DC location. For the other locations, you will need to search at <http://www.usajobs.gov/> By typing FHWA.HSA-2007-0009 into the search bar.

### **AASHTO International Scan Study Tour on Transportation Research Program Administration Looking for County Representatives**

While the locations of the international tour is not set, interested NACE members should contact NACE Executive Director Tony Giancola of their interest. Please note that the tour dates will be during our next annual conference in Portland Oregon.

**I. Background:** Most developed nations support programs of research and technology (R&T) on surface transportation issues. Regardless of program size, nearly all jurisdictions face similar challenges associated with limited funding, personnel, and other resources. These obstacles, coupled with increased demands for on-time, valid and useful research results, dictate that research programs be administered with peak performance and efficiency.

**II. Panel Purpose and Scope:** The purpose of this tour is to examine transportation research program administration practices in other countries. The tour will seek to identify successful foreign program management practices, different from our own, that can be applied in the United States. In addition, the scan will enable participants to study existing and potential partnerships among the numerous regions and jurisdictions tasked with managing transportation research worldwide. Moreover, the tour will enhance future opportunities for collaboration, information sharing, and technology transfer with our international counterparts.

**III. Panel Sponsorship & Composition:** The Panel is co-sponsored by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), the U.S. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) an agency of the U.S. Department of Transportation and, the National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP). It will be composed of representatives of the FHWA, AASHTO and U.S. public sector professional associations. Biographic information on panel members will be provided to international participants in January 2008.

**IV. Panel Topics of Interest:** General topics of interest to the U.S. Panel include:

1. Identification and prioritization of short-term and long-term research needs.
2. Use of research to formulate effective policy.
3. Coordination among multiple jurisdictions to identify and address national priorities.
4. Information management and accessibility.
5. Opportunities for expanded leveraging and efficient use of research funds.
6. Opportunities for partnering and collaboration.
7. Effective program delivery.
8. Innovative techniques to measure and improve program performance.
9. Enhanced dissemination of research successes and demonstration of program value.

Specific questions that amplify the panel's interests in the foregoing topics will be provided to international participants in January 2008.

**V. Panel Itinerary:** The panel is presently scheduled to be travel abroad during the period 11 to 27 April 2008.

### **ITE Conference on Transportation Safety Planned in 2008**

The 2008 ITE Technical Conference will be focused on Transportation Safety. This is an excellent opportunity to broaden our safety reach to the Traffic Engineering community.

The event will be held March 30 - April 2, 2008, in Miami. Abstracts are being accepted until August 1. To submit an abstract or learn more about the event, go to the following web site: <http://www.cornetser.com/ite> . If you have questions about the submittal process, please contact Aliyah N. Horton, Professional Development and Outreach Senior Director, at 202-289-0222 ext. 137 or [ahorton@ite.org](mailto:ahorton@ite.org) .

### **9TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON LOW-VOLUME ROADS:**

#### **PLENARY SESSION VIDEO NOW AVAILABLE**

[http://www.trb.org/news/blurbs\\_detail.asp?id=4534](http://www.trb.org/news/blurbs_detail.asp?id=4534)

TRB held the 9th International Conference on Low-Volume Roads on June 24-27, 2007, in Austin, Texas. The Conference highlighted the latest in international low-volume road topics and innovations in areas such as safety improvements, environmental design, highway and road design best practices, innovative road surface treatments, and more. A video recording of the plenary session, which included the following presentations, is now available.

- \* The Road Ahead, J. Richard Capka, Federal Highway Administration
- \* The Influence of Non-Technical Factors on the Planning and Provision of Low Volume Roads, Nazir Alli, South African National Roads Agency
- \* From the Farm to the Market: The Texas FM Story, Michael Behrens, Texas Department of Transportation
- \* Keynote Address: Planning Roads for Rural Communities, Maryvonne Plessis-Fraissard, World Bank

### **TEST METHODS FOR CHARACTERIZING AGGREGATE SHAPE, TEXTURE, AND ANGULARITY**

[http://www.trb.org/news/blurbs\\_detail.asp?id=7275](http://www.trb.org/news/blurbs_detail.asp?id=7275)

TRB's National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Report 555: Test Methods for Characterizing Aggregate Shape, Texture, and Angularity examines a methodology for classifying aggregates based on the distribution of shape, texture, and angularity characteristics. The report also explores a test method that it is appropriate for use in central and field laboratories, which measures shape, texture, and angularity characteristics of aggregates used in hot-mix asphalt, hydraulic cement concrete, and unbound base and subbase layers of pavements. Appendixes for the report were published as NCHRP Web-Only Document 80.

### **APPENDIXES TO NCHRP REPORT 555: TEST METHODS FOR CHARACTERIZING AGGREGATE SHAPE, TEXTURE, AND ANGULARITY**

[http://www.trb.org/news/blurbs\\_detail.asp?id=7276](http://www.trb.org/news/blurbs_detail.asp?id=7276)

TRB's National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Web-Only Document 80, Appendixes to NCHRP Report 555: Test Methods for Characterizing Aggregate Shape, Texture, and Angularity contains appendixes B through E of NCHRP Report 555.

### **SAFETY COMPASS NEWSLETTER: JUNE/JULY/AUGUST 2007**

[http://www.trb.org/news/blurbs\\_detail.asp?id=7856](http://www.trb.org/news/blurbs_detail.asp?id=7856)

The U.S. Federal Highway Administration has released the latest issue of its Safety Compass newsletter. The newsletter covers program delivery, best practices, research, training, regulations, and legislation designed to help improve and establish a more productive national and local safety program.

### **FHWA FOCUS MAGAZINE - JUNE 2007**

[http://www.trb.org/news/blurbs\\_detail.asp?id=7862](http://www.trb.org/news/blurbs_detail.asp?id=7862)

Articles in the June 2007 issue of the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA's) Focus magazine include:

- \* Asset Management Online and in Real Time
- \* A National Call for Bridge Preservation
- \* Excellence in Utility Relocation and Accommodation 2007
- \* New Mobile Concrete Lab Takes to the Road
- \* The Strategic Highway Research Program 2 (SHRP 2) Sponsors Safety Research Symposium
- \* Highway Technology Calendar

### **PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLIST INTERSECTION SAFETY INDICES**

[http://www.trb.org/news/blurbs\\_detail.asp?id=7879](http://www.trb.org/news/blurbs_detail.asp?id=7879)

The U.S. Federal Highway Administration has released a TechBrief that examines the Pedestrian and Bicycle Intersection Safety Indices (Ped ISI and Bike ISI), a set of models that help users to identify and prioritize intersection crossings and intersection approach legs for pedestrian and bicycle safety assessments.

### **FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION UNIVERSITY COURSE ON BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN TRANSPORTATION**

[http://www.trb.org/news/blurbs\\_detail.asp?id=7876](http://www.trb.org/news/blurbs_detail.asp?id=7876)

The U.S. Federal Highway Administration has released its University Course on Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation, which is designed to help prepare the next generation of professionals meet the challenges necessary to create healthy, sustainable, and livable communities. The University Course contains modular resource material that is intended for use in university courses on bicycle and pedestrian transportation. The student workbook contains 24 lessons that span a wide range of topics including an introduction to bicycling and walking issues, planning and designing for bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and supporting elements and programs. Scripted slideshows for all 24 lessons are available to facilitate course development and delivery. An overview lecture and scripted slideshow also is provided when a one- or two-lecture overview is needed for existing undergraduate or graduate courses.

### **THE USE OF LITHIUM TO PREVENT OR MITIGATE ALKALI-SILICA REACTION IN CONCRETE PAVEMENTS AND STRUCTURES**

[http://www.trb.org/news/blurbs\\_detail.asp?id=7877](http://www.trb.org/news/blurbs_detail.asp?id=7877)

The U.S. Federal Highway Administration has released a report that explores information and guidance to test, specify, and use lithium compounds in new concrete construction, as well as in repair and service life extension applications.