

Ready... Set... GO!

Stimulus package jump-starts transportation engines for both agencies and firms.

By Linda Mastaglio



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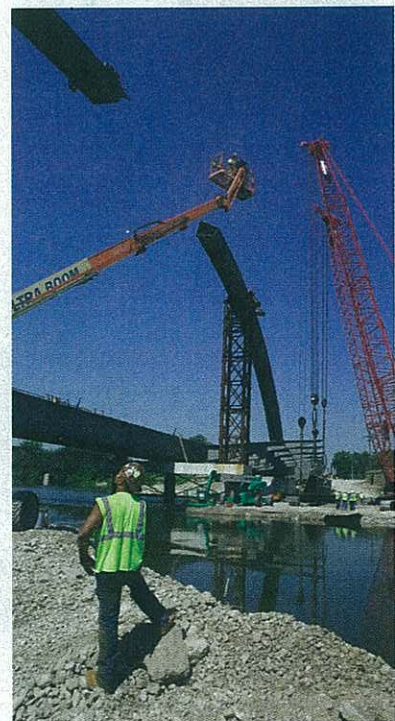


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TRANSPORTATION LEADERS ROUNDTABLE



FRANK T. MARTIN
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT
NATIONAL BUSINESS SECTOR MANAGER,
TRANSIT, PBS&J

Transit Agencies Face Hard Decisions

Last year's spike in the price of gasoline prompted millions of Americans to rely less on their cars and instead use transit more often. This trend has continued despite the recent drop in fuel prices. This is great news for transit, but there is a downside: Many transit agencies are ill-equipped to accommodate increased demand and they face budgetary shortfalls that could require them to trim services or raise fares just as ridership is beginning to boom. Neither option is ideal in terms of encouraging greater transit use.

After years of inadequate funding, transit agencies find themselves in a bind. They need to undertake capital improvements to ensure that they can meet the increased demand. Meanwhile, this demand means that the agencies face higher operating costs. The recent economic downturn only exacerbates the difficulties that many transit agencies must contend with.

All signs point to continued public interest in transit. Yet transit agencies clearly face hard decisions, as do elected officials tasked with finding the means to support critical transit programs. Strong leadership, therefore, is needed at all levels of government to ensure that transit receives the necessary funding to continue to meet current and future demand. ■



RAYMOND POUPORE
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
NATIONAL CONSTRUCTION ALLIANCE II

Getting Americans Back to Work

According to the 2008 Mayors' Action Forum on Infrastructure, China and India are spending three to four times what we do as a share of their total economy on infrastructure investments. Those countries understand that the investment in infrastructure is essential in a global economy. Failing to significantly invest in our infrastructure will mean jeopardizing American economic dominance in the future. Starting to improve our country's infrastructure will do more than merely address our immediate economic pain; it will help get America moving again.

The cost of traffic congestion wreaks havoc on American families and businesses, exacerbating problems with air pollution, reducing quality of life and costing billions of dollars in wasted time. Modernizing roads, bridges, transit and waterways will lead toward long term energy cost savings and immeasurably improve the quality of life for millions of Americans. As the U.S. Department of Transportation has stated, for every \$1 billion invested in surface transportation infrastructure over 30,000 jobs are created in construction and the overall economy.

Americans urgently need work. An investment in infrastructure will deliver real jobs, with real paychecks, in the real economy. ■

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