Transportation Friday

An electronic newsletter concerning regional transportation issues

Friday, March 21st , 2014 Volume 9, Number 12

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Origin Destination Study Using Cell Phones

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Intelligent Transportation System Diversion Route Planning Study

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The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission is hosting a one day conference on May 2, 2014 at the Daphne Civic Center concerning highway funding. This is a chance for local governments, engineers and planners to hear what others are doing around the country in terms of innovative funding strategies to assist in funding local infrastructure. It will also allow for a regional forum of needs, priorities and funding issues.

Anthony Johnson, Monica Williamson, Tom Piper, and Kevin Harrison

www.mobilempo.org check us out on FACEBOOK

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Mobile MPO Updates

South Alabama Highway Funding Conference

As part of the SAPRC Strategic Sessions held in January, a recommended action goal was to host a regional transportation forum for our member governments. The full SARPC board met this week in Brewton, and among several topics discussed, the forum/conference was on the agenda. Since *transportation* is a broad subject with many facets, this forum has turned into the South Alabama Transportation Funding Conference. It is a timely topic with ALDOT's current funding situation, and the federal outlook [SEE HERE]. Is there anything local governments can do? Please plan on

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registering for the South Alabama Highway Funding Conference now. US Representative Bradley Byrne will be the luncheon speaker, and we will have several regional and national speakers; the agenda will be out soon.

JOINT MOBILE MPO Policy Board and TCC/CAC MEETING

The Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization met on Wednesday, March 12, 2014 at 10:00 am at the GM&O Building in the Board Room at 110 Beauregard Street. The MPO approved the following items to be included into the Transportation Improvement Program:

National Highway Funds			
CN	Resurfacing on SR-158 from west of SR 213 to SR 13 (US 43)	FY 2014	$1,639,613
New Freedom (Rural/State)			
TR	Mobile Bay Transportation, Rural, Capital	FY 2014	$73,012
TR	Mobile Bay Transportation, Rural, Operations	FY 2014	$164,250
TR	Mobile ARC, Rural, Operations	FY 2014	$489,060
TR	Mobile ARC, Rural, Operations	FY 2015	$513,512
TR	Mobile ARC, Rural, Operations	FY 2016	$539,188
JARC Funds (Rural/State)			
TR	Mobile Bay Transportation Rural, Operations	FY 2014	$146,000

The MPO board was also updated on the Transportation Alternatives Program, Destination 2040 and Phase II the Gulf Coast Climate Change Study.

SARPC HOSTING GPS WORKSHOP

This week the SARPC Transportation Planning Department hosted a free half day GPS orientation class for users of Trimble GPS units. The class focused on GPS fundamentals using Terrasync and Pathfinder Office software workflow and will include Data Dictionary Creation, Data Collection and Attribution, Point, Line, and Polygon creation, Nesting and Segmenting, Post Processing, Data Exportation to GIS format, and File Geodatabase Creation.

Projects Within Region Let April 4th, 2014

BALDWIN COUNTY

- for constructing the Resurfacing and Traffic Stripe on South Hoyle Avenue from CR-57 (Brady Road) to the L & N Railroad Right-Of-Way (ROW) in Bay Minette. Length 0.424 mi.
- for constructing the Planing, Resurfacing and Traffic Stripe on SR-181 from near SR-16 (US-90) (MP 16.493) to the intersection of SR-3 (US-31) (MP 18.260). Length 1.070 mi.

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

- for constructing the Industrial Park Improvements (Grade, Drain, Base, and Pave) on Wind River Road Extension from CR-14 to Wind River Road South in Atmore. Length 0.093 mi..

MOBILE COUNTY

- for constructing the Safety Widening, Resurfacing, and Traffic Stripe on SR-163 from the junction of SR-193 to the south abutment of the Dog River Bridge east of Theodore. Length 2.482 mi

What's Under Construction?

Legislative Updates

WRDA Bill Expected to Move by the End of April: Differences between House and Senate versions of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) have been resolved. After each Chamber passed a version of the bill last year, negotiators ran into significant trouble when trying to bridge the gap. This new agreement allows an authorization bill to be brought forward in the near future. Michael Toohey, President and CEO of Waterways Council Inc., said "they should have WRDA done after April 30." Rep. Bill Shuster (R-PA) said that the committee would return to the usual schedule of doing WRDA bills every two years after this.

House Hearing: Oversight of U.S. DOTs Implementation of MAP-21 and FY15 Budget Request for Surface Transportation: The Subcommittee on Highways and Transit met Wednesday, to receive testimony related to implementing the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21)

and the fiscal year (FY) 2015 budget request for surface transportation.

Chairman Tom Petri (R-WI) highlighted the consolidation under MAP-21, project delivery reforms, performance management rules, and establishment of the Public Transportation Emergency Relief program. He also mentioned the President's budget which includes the first year of a four-year $302 billion surface transportation reauthorization proposal that increases funding for the Nation's highways, bridges, transit, and rail systems. Congresswoman Eleanor Norton (D-DC) said failure to act on reauthorization would be a disaster.

Peter M. Rogoff, Acting Under Secretary for Policy Office of the Secretary at the U.S. DOT, confirmed what we have known and feared for some time: namely, that cash management measures may be implemented as soon as July if Congress does not act before then. He stressed that "the highway account of the trust fund is likely to dip below the critical $4 billion funding level as soon as July and the transit account will fall below $1 billion sometime in August."

Greg Nadeau, FHWA Acting Administrator; Therese McMillan, Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Acting Administrator; Anne S. Ferro, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration Administrator; and David Friedman, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Acting Administrator, all highlighted the President's FY15 budget request, making the case that their agencies are in need of the extra funding the budget contains.

Funding Opportunities

President Obama, DOT Secretary Foxx Announce $600 Million for Sixth Round of TIGER Funding
Notice of Funding Availability now available.

ST. PAUL – U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx will join President Barack Obama today to announce that $600 million will be made available to fund transportation projects across the country under a sixth round of the U.S. Department of Transportation's highly successful Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) competitive grant program. The announcement will be made at the Union Depot in St. Paul, which received $35 million in the first round of TIGER to renovate the facility and restore tracks. Combined with roughly $480 million in federal funding for the Central Corridor light rail transit line, St. Paul's Union Depot is proof of the impact that transportation investment can make, leading to job creation, downtown revitalization and economic growth.

"President Obama knows that transportation means opportunity for so many Americans," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx. "TIGER investments answer the President's challenge to expand opportunity through a strong transportation system that connects Americans with a better way of life." [HERE] http://www.dot.gov/tiger

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FY 2014 Transportation Alternatives Program –TAP FUNDS
Deadline: *May 2, 2014*

Only cities and counties can apply for TAP funds, and your jurisdiction will determine your application for TAP Funds. If you are in the Mobile Urbanized Area, you are eligible for the Urban Area TAP Funds available through the Mobile MPO at South Alabama Regional Planning Commission. If you are outside of the Mobile Urbanized Area you will apply to ADLOT for TAP funds (see below). The applications, guidelines and funding limits between the STATE TAP and the URBAN TAP *are slightly different*. Please be aware, and if there are any question please do not hesitate to call us. The federal guidance on TAP funs is here: https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/guidance/guidetap.cfm

MOBILE URBANIZED TAP FUNDS
The Mobile MPO announces the availability of the FY 2014 Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funding. The maximum amount that can be applied for with Mobile Urbanized TAP funds is $200,000 (federal). The TAP provides funding for programs and projects defined as transportation alternatives, including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, community improvement activities, and environmental mitigation; recreational trail program projects; safe routes to school projects; and projects for planning, designing, or constructing boulevards and other

roadways largely in the right-of-way of former Interstate System routes or other divided highways. Applications for Mobile Urban Area TAP Funds can be found [HERE]

ALDOT TAP FUNDS

The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) announced application availability for the FY 2014 Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funding. The TAP provides funding for programs and projects defined as transportation alternatives, including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, community improvement activities, and environmental mitigation; recreational trail program projects; safe routes to school projects; and projects for planning, designing, or constructing boulevards and other roadways largely in the right-of-way of former Interstate System routes or other divided highways. ***ALDOT TAP Funding applications can only come from ALDOT [HERE].***

GRANT: FHWA's Accelerated Innovation Deployment Demonstration
Open until the Program Ends or Funding is No Longer Available

FHWA announced on February 19 the availability of $30 million (M) in funding and requests grant applications for FHWA's Accelerated Innovation Deployment (AID) Demonstration authorized within the Technology and Innovation Deployment Program under the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21). On a rolling basis, AID Demonstration funds will award multiple projects that meet eligibility, requirements, and selection criteria**. [HERE]**

Economic Development Administration
http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/search-grants.html

EDA provides strategic investments that foster job creation and attract private investment to support development in economically distressed areas of the United States. Under this FFO, EDA solicits applications from both rural and urban areas to provide investments that support construction, non-construction, technical assistance, and revolving loan fund projects under EDA's Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance programs. Grants made under these programs are designed to leverage existing regional assets to support the implementation of economic development strategies that advance new ideas and creative approaches to advance economic prosperity in distressed communities. Link to Additional Information: EDA's website Please contact Diane Burnett of SARPC staff for questions 706-4621. Also, don't forget SARPC has a revolving fund loan program. http://www.sarpc.org/rlf.asp The RLF is a locally controlled source of capital used to finance small business start-up and expansion whose projects will create permanent jobs. By combining RLF and bank financing the borrower can realize an effective rate well below market rates.

Just For Fun

The Message of the Apple Core: Don't let the apple fall…. near the road

ALL LITTER IS BAD LITTER

An apple makes the perfect snack food, or even breakfast food if you are the type of person that eats while driving. But remember that all litter is bad. An apple core left on the side of the road, will not plant an apple tree, it will attract wildlife to finish your snack. So unless you are in the State of Michigan, remember, No Litter is "Safe" Litter.

In the News

Downtown bicycle rentals available at Mobile Emporium

In response to the increasing interest in biking downtown from locals and visitors alike, the Downtown Mobile Alliance and Regions Bank have partnered to create a bike rental program. Regions Green Bicycles will be available to rent on an hourly or daily basis to explore the many delights of downtown. City centers across the country have instituted bike rental opportunities, offering another mode of transportation that operates at a friendly pace for exploring a neighborhood. Not to mention how much fun it is to travel on two wheels!

Study: Alabama roads improving at slow pace

Bryan Davis
Reporter-*Birmingham Business Journal*
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Alabama has improved its existing roads over the past few years, but according to a recent study "Repair Priorities 2014" put out by Smart Growth for America and Taxpayers for Common Sense, the state has a long way to go to bring deteriorating roads into good condition.

"States already have a significant backlog of repair work to do," the report said. "Thousands of lane miles in poor condition represent billions of dollars of needed repair spending. According to American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, every $1 spent to keep a road in good condition avoids $6-$14 needed later to rebuild the same road once it has deteriorated significantly."

Alabama spends about $252 million of its $556 million transportation budget yearly on road expansion, representing 45 percent of road work. About $304 million is put into road repairs, which represents 55 percent of the budget. By comparison, Mississippi spends only 3 percent of its $619 million transportation budget on road repairs, putting $603 million into road expansion. In 2008, according to the report, 51 percent of the roads in Alabama were listed in good condition. By 2011, the percentage rose to 66 percent.

The report says that states which place more money into expansion are costing taxpayers down the road, as costs rise as road conditions decline and also rise as road networks expand.
"The good news is states can make a significant dent in the current backlog of roads in poor condition simply by reallocating funds within their existing capital budgets," the report recommends. "Many states will need to reconsider spending on expansion and redirect significant portions of their existing capital budgets toward repair and preservation." Continue [HERE]

Alabama's 'second mortgage' on road program could save state $30 million
Alabama to pledge gas tax revenue to get lower interest rate on bonds

WASHINGTON — Alabama will pledge its gas tax revenue in order to get lower interest rates on the money it is borrowing to pay for $1 billion in transportation projects, under legislation headed to Gov. Robert Bentley's desk.

There are estimates that the move could save the state $30 million.

Bentley said the extra collateral is needed because the original revenue used to repay the bonds — the federal gas tax — is no longer considered reliable enough on its own. Wall Street has expressed concerns about the risk of the federal payments being interrupted, citing among other issues the earlier government shutdown and debt ceiling threats.

In a recent interview, the governor compared his proposal to getting a second mortgage.

"The state will back up the payment of the bonds behind the federal government, and that will keep our interest rates low," Bentley said.

Bentley is using proceeds from the bonds — called Grant Anticipation Revenue Vehicles, or GARVEE bonds — to pay 80 percent of the cost of hundreds of road and bridge projects around the state. Local governments are pitching in the remaining 20 percent.

The Alabama Transportation Rehabilitation and Improvement Program (ATRIP) is a windfall for local officials who want to improve public safety by fixing bridges or building roads to attract new businesses.

But Wall Street has expressed concerns about whether Congress can keep the federal highway trust funds solvent and running smoothly for the GARVEE bonds.

Moody's Investors Service last week downgraded 17 GARVEE bonds from other states, citing the risk of interrupted payments of federal transportation aid to the states.

The risk is caused by "the government's recurring episodes of threatened debt ceiling expirations, government shutdowns, and the threat of depletion of the highway trust fund balance later this year due to the fund's persistent structural imbalance," according to a Feb. 18 statement from Moody's.

The downgrade affected only "standalone" GARVEE bonds that aren't backed by additional revenues, according to Moody's. continue [HERE]

Transportation Research

Combined Intelligence - Working Together for Smarter Transportation

In September of 2014 the Gulf Region Intelligent Transportation Society (GRITS), the Intelligent Transportation Society of Florida (ITSFL) and the Intelligent Transportation Society of Georgia (ITSGA), will come together for a joint annual meeting. Join us in 2014 for the ITS 3C Summit.

ITS 3C Summit

The conference will be held **September 14-17, 2014** at the Arthur R. Outlaw Convention Center along the waterfront in Mobile, Alabama.

Arthur R. Outlaw Convention Center
One South Water Street
Mobile, AL 36602

U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Offers Talking Technology and Transportation (T3) Webinars and On-line Training Opportunities

Did you know the USDOT's Intelligent Transportation Systems Joint Program Office (ITS JPO) offers FREE training and web-based resources?

Throughout the year, the ITS JPO's Professional Capacity Building (PCB) Program offers on-line training opportunities and regularly hosts T3 Webinars on a wide range of topics related to ITS planning, design, procurement, deployment, operations, noteworthy practices, and lessons learned. [HERE]

Pavement Management 2013, Volume 3 realeased

TRB's Transportation Research Record: Journal of the Transportation Research Board, No. 2368 consists of 14 pages that explore long-lasting perpetual asphalt pavements; a global sensitivity analysis of mechanistic–empirical performance predictions for flexible pavements; a framework for determining load equivalencies; mitigation of rutting in asphalt overlays of concrete pavements; top-down cracking of asphalt pavements in North Carolina; and an assessment of fatigue cracking in flexible pavements.

This issue of the TRR also examines the combined effect of three-dimensional contact load and thermal gradients on the cracking performance of heavy-duty asphalt pavements; the development of a full-scale reflective cracking test; the performance of prediction models for cracked, seated, and overlaid concrete pavements; improvements is full-depth repair practices for distresses in continuously reinforced concrete pavement; responses and performance of stabilized full-depth reclaimed pavements; available mechanistic–empirical procedures for reflective cracking in asphalt overlays of concrete pavements; a refined failure mode for thin and ultrathin whitetopping; and revised design procedures for thin and ultrathin bonded whitetopping.