

FEDERAL HIGHWAY  
ADMINISTRATION

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# State of Texas Border Partnership E-Newsletter

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## U.S. DOT Recovery Act spending nears \$6 billion

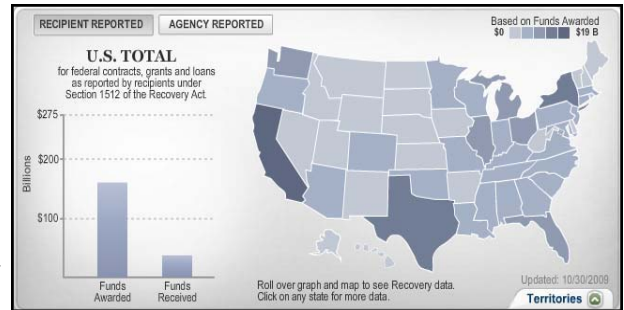
Payouts rose nearly \$2 billion since September as project bills come in

Infrastructure project spending under the stimulus law by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) reached \$5.9 billion through Nov. 13, a nearly \$2 billion increase since the beginning of October 2009.

U.S. DOT reimburses states when bills come in for projects covered by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act ("Recovery Act"). So far, the U.S. DOT has approved projects valued at more than \$31 billion.

The Recovery Act disbursements so far are mostly for bridge and highway repairs, or new road and bridge infrastructure that could be rapidly completed in the period since states faced early summer application deadlines. Other U.S. DOT Recovery Act spending has gone to transit operations and airport needs.

According to State DOT reports filed through the [Recovery.gov](http://Recovery.gov) Web site, U.S. DOT said it had paid out \$4.06 billion through Oct. 9 and ended October with \$5.3 billion in payouts. That rose to \$5.6 billion in the first week of November, and then to the \$5.9 billion for the latest reporting week, which reflects new checks totaling about \$300 million weekly.



U.S. DOT has yet to award grants out of its \$8 billion fund for passenger train expansion—usually in freight railroad corridors—and development of dedicated high-speed passenger rail lines between cities.

The U.S. DOT also has a \$1.5 billion discretionary grant pool that Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood can spread among projects he deems of special value. He has already said some of that money will go to port needs, since ports were not specifically mentioned in any Recovery Act infrastructure accounts.

Transport-related spending outside of U.S. DOT under the Recovery Act also includes rail bridge work over navigable waterways, diesel emission reduction programs that replace old trucks and locomotives, border inspection facilities for freight as well as people and infrastructure support funding for freight facilities as part of economic development. See related story on page 6 of this newsletter.

For additional information, please see:  
<http://www.joc.com/node/414815>  
Source: Journal of Commerce Online -  
News Story  
Date: 11/20/09



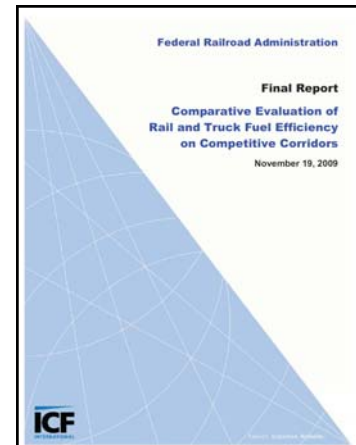
## New Study Shows Freight Rail Fuel Efficiency Up More Than 20 Percent Since 1999

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) recently released a study showing vast improvements in freight rail fuel efficiency over the last two decades, approximately 22 percent between 1990 and 2006. "While all types of transportation are vital to the distribution of goods across the country, this study shows that utilizing America's freight rail system can lead to significant fuel savings," said FRA Administrator Joseph Szabo. "The environmental benefits of these positive changes over the last two decades are enormous.

We look forward to working with the freight rail industry to make sure these gains continue." Several factors point to the reasons for rail's fuel effi-

ciency, including the improvement in diesel-electric locomotives, the increased use of double stack trains, track and signal improvements, and longer trains.

The complete FRA study can be found at: [http://www.fra.dot.gov/Downloads/Comparative\\_Evaluation\\_Rail\\_Truck\\_Fuel\\_Efficiency.pdf](http://www.fra.dot.gov/Downloads/Comparative_Evaluation_Rail_Truck_Fuel_Efficiency.pdf)



## CSXT introduces GenSet switchers in Indiana

On November 19, 2009, [CSX Transportation](#) unveiled two ultra-low-emission GenSet locomotives at Avon Yard near Indianapolis.

CSXT is the first railroad in Indiana to use GenSets, according to the Class I. The locomotives can reduce nitrous oxide and particulate matter emissions by 80 percent, and carbon dioxide emissions by up to 50 percent compared with a conventional switcher.

In addition, the GenSets are quieter than other locomotives and can switch to a "sleep" mode after a period of inactivity, CSXT said.

National Railroad Equipment Co. has retrofitted the Class I's entire GenSet fleet, including the two Avon Yard locomotives.

The retrofits were jointly funded by the Class I and Federal Congestion, Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement program. The town of Avon also applied for state funding on CSXT's behalf.

By year's end, the Class I expects to upgrade 1,200 locomotives to reduce emissions and cut fuel consumption by nearly 10 million gallons.

According to the CSXT website, moving freight by rail is three times more fuel-efficient than moving freight on the highway. Trains can move a ton of freight more

than 436 miles on a single gallon of fuel. Efficient use of fuel means less greenhouse gas emissions for our nation. According to the EPA, freight railroads account for just 2% of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions from transportation sources and well under 1% of greenhouse gas emissions from all sources.

Since 1980, through technology and innovation, the railroad industry has improved locomotive fuel efficiency by over 80%. In 2006 alone, U.S. freight railroads consumed 3.3 billion fewer gallons of diesel fuel and emitted 37 million fewer tons of carbon dioxide than they would have if their fuel efficiency had remained constant since 1980.

According to CSX website it has developed an online Carbon Calculator that calculates the carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions savings of specific rail shipments, providing comparative data among transportation choices. For additional information on environmental sustainability and rail efforts by CSX, please see the following website: [http://www.csx.com/?fuseaction=about.environment\\_sustainability](http://www.csx.com/?fuseaction=about.environment_sustainability)



## U.S. DOT Plans Series of Gatherings to Solicit Public Input on Priorities

The U.S. Department of Transportation will soon hold a series of public meetings across the country to receive stakeholder and public opinion on transportation policy and strategy, U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood announced Nov. 12.

The meetings will start in early December and continue over a period of 90 days, LaHood told a Transportation Research Board conference on infrastructure preservation.

U.S. DOT hopes to hear feedback on issues such as what course a long-term authorization measure for surface transportation programs should take. LaHood noted his department is working "hand in glove" with the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, which has proposed a six-year, \$500 billion authorization program, but is having trouble finding enough money to pay for the package. Key senators are presently pushing to enact a six-month authorization extension and to consider a long-range bill next year.

Public meetings will begin Dec. 1 in New Orleans; continue in California, the Midwest, and the West; and end on the East Coast, LaHood said. There will be a total of five to seven meetings.

"We believe that can turn into a pretty significant transportation plan for the future," LaHood said. "Early next year, we'll have a pretty good feel for what people are thinking about."

### Secretary Meets with "Complete Streets" Advocates, Encourages Them to Participate in Forums

LaHood met with several transportation advocacy groups Monday to review a recent report on pedestrian safety called "Dangerous by Design." The report was issued by Transportation for America and the Surface Transportation Policy Partnership. Other organizations participating in Monday's meeting were AARP, America Bikes, American Public Health Association, National Complete Streets Coalition, Safe Routes to School National Partnership, and Smart Growth America.



In a [blog posting Tuesday](#), November 17th Secretary LaHood encouraged smart growth and complete streets proponents to attend the public meetings coming up to ensure their voices are heard.

"When we hold our upcoming open meetings on new transportation legislation, I urge all of you who care about this important issue -- from experts to everyday pedestrians -- to come forward and tell us how strongly you feel about this," LaHood wrote.

"Then, we can let Congress know how much momentum is truly behind safer road planning." The complete streets approach favors designing roadways to accommodate not just motorists but also pedestrians and bicyclists.

For additional information, please see the following web-link: <http://www.aashtojournal.org/Pages/112009meetings.aspx>

Secretary LaHood's blog is located at: <http://fastlane.dot.gov/2009/11/report-calls-for-safer-roadway-planning.html>

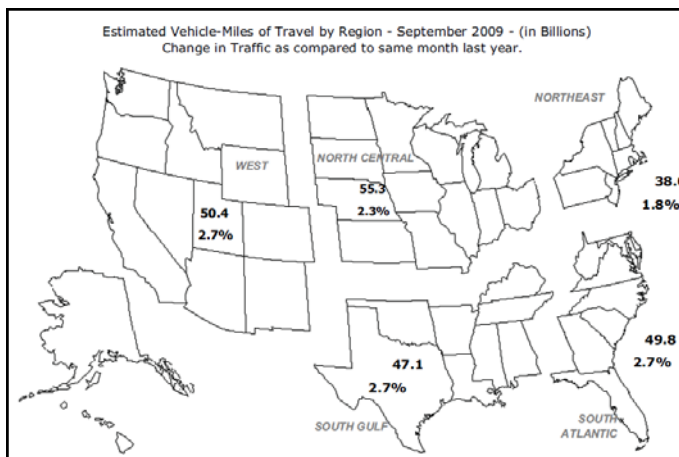


## Travel Volume Trends Show Travel Increases by 2.5% in September 2009

According to the FHWA Office of Highway Policy during the month of September 2009 travel on all roads and streets changed by **+2.5%** (5.8 billion vehicle miles) for **September 2009** as compared with September 2008. Travel for the month is estimated to be 240.7 billion vehicle miles.

In addition, cumulative travel for 2009 changed by **+0.3%** (6.7 billion vehicle miles). The cumulative estimate for the year is 2,208.5 billion vehicle miles of travel.

A copy of the FHWA Travel Volume Trends report may be downloaded from the FHWA Office of Highway Policy Information's website at: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/ohim/tvtw/09septvt/09septvt.pdf>



Source: FHWA Office of Highway Policy Information, Travel Volume Trends Report (November 2009)

## CSA 2010: Your new company, driver safety 'credit report'

With technology morphing the way we live our lives at warp speed, it's no big surprise that the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) has decided to go high-tech with its compliance enforcement. Currently, the odds of being hit with any substantive on-site compliance review are somewhere between slim and none.

Because of lack of staffing and the cumbersome nature of plowing through mountains of paperwork, each year FMCSA officials are only able to conduct compliance reviews on less than 2 percent of the commercial motor vehicle carriers in the U.S.

Enter the technology knight on a white horse – CSA 2010. Back in 2004, FMCSA officials started developing a data-driven system of analyzing all inspection reports on motor carriers and drivers to identify trends of noncompliance. The new compliance enforcement program put together by FMCSA is clever in its concept that enforcement will be triggered by performance.

The mega database system, with all of its algorithms and programs, will spit out monthly safety ratings for companies and drivers. Those who crop up with nu-

merous violations – ranging from the not-so-serious to out-of-service – will pop up on FMCSA's compliance radar. But that doesn't necessarily mean you'll get a full-blown on-site compliance review. Depending on the severity of the rating, you could get anything from a letter telling you to straighten up your act to that dreaded on-site review that likens to an IRS audit.

Trucking companies will have a chance to get their act together and report back to FMCSA to keep a good safety fitness rating. There will be three fitness rating in the 2010 program: "unfit," "marginal" and "continue to operate."

The overall concept is simple enough but, as with anything, the devil is in the details – and with CSA 2010, there are a ton of details.

The program can be broken down into the data, the math behind the number, enforcement, safety fitness determinations and the possible hiccups motor carriers and truckers could encounter along the way.

For additional information, please see the following website:  
URL: [http://www.landlinemag.com/todays\\_news/Daily/2009/Oct09/102609/102609-05.htm](http://www.landlinemag.com/todays_news/Daily/2009/Oct09/102609/102609-05.htm)  
SOURCE: Landline Magazine

## Panama Canal Expansion Work to Begin in January 2010

PANAMA CITY – Construction of a new set of locks for the Panama Canal will begin in January, the consortium that holds the concession for the expansion project said.

“We’re at the beginning and there are a lot of bureaucratic hurdles, presentations to make, permits to acquire.

The real work begins in January,” Antonio Zaffaroni, executive director of the GUPC consortium, said on Friday.

He added that for now it is all about “preparation, relocating the animals, cutting down the trees.”

Zaffaroni said the first phase of the project will involve excavation work, as well as setting up “the installations for producing concrete, crushed stone, cement and equipment for unloading the supplies.”

GUPC, a consortium led by Spanish company Sacyr Vallehermoso, won the contract to build a third set of locks for the canal, beating out several other contenders with a \$3.1 billion price proposal.

The proposal was the lowest offered among the three consortiums participating in the final phase of the bidding and was under the \$3.4 billion ceiling set by the Panama Canal Authority. GUPC also won out.

Regarding the doubts raised about the difficulty of completing the work at that cost, Zaffaroni said that at this time there is “no cause for concern.”

“Our budget is lower due to our better technical rating ... having studied the project well, (our budget) was lower because transport cycles, construction methods were optimized,” he said.

The international consortium, which also includes Italy’s Impreglio, Belgium’s Jan de Nul and Panama’s

Constructora Urbana, will have 1,883 days – about five years and two months beginning Aug. 25, 2009 – to complete the project.

Construction of the third set of locks is considered the big prize in the Panama Canal expansion project, a huge undertaking estimated to cost \$5.25 billion that still

has one project remaining to be put up for bidding.



The canal, designed in 1904 for ships with a 267-meter (875-foot) length and 28-meter (92-foot) beam, is too small to handle the “post-Panamax” ships that are three times as big, making it necessary to expand by building the new set of locks.

The Panama Canal Authority, the government agency that manages the waterway, wants to double transit capacity.

The 80-kilometer (49-mile) canal, which currently handles about 5 percent of world trade, has been under Panamanian management since Dec. 31, 1999, when the United States surrendered it in keeping with the 1977 Torrijos-Carter treaties.

For additional information, please see the following website: [http://www.laht.com/article.asp?](http://www.laht.com/article.asp?ArticleId=347390&CategoryId=14088)

[ArticleId=347390&CategoryId=14088](http://www.laht.com/article.asp?ArticleId=347390&CategoryId=14088)

## Biden Praises U.S. DOT for Approving More Than 10,000 Improvements

Vice President Joe Biden commended the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) on November 12th for having jump started more than 10,000 transportation improvement projects nationwide using funding provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

"Just nine months in, tens of thousands of people are on the job at highway, bridge, rail, and airport improvement projects across the country thanks to the quick action by the Department of Transportation putting recovery act dollars to work," Biden said.

"These projects are not only providing new opportunities for hard-hit workers and businesses during tough economic times, but helping lay a strong foundation to support our 21st century economy. This is a significant milestone on the road to recovery, but we continue to work every day to create more jobs and drive economic growth." As of Nov. 12, when Biden made the announcement, U.S. DOT had obligated 10,041 transportation projects across the United States from its \$48.1 billion allocation of recovery funds. "We have spurred construction of

10,000 transportation projects across the country -- many of which would have been stalled or shelved altogether without recovery act dollars," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood. "In addition to being economically crucial, these projects are critical investments in our national infrastructure."

Of the 10,041 projects approved for recovery funding, 6,547 are under construction, according to U.S. DOT. Work on the remaining projects is scheduled to begin in the coming months.

For additional information, please see the following web address: <http://www.aashtojournal.org/Pages/112009milestone.aspx>

Secretary LaHood's blog on this topic is at the following web address: <http://fastlane.dot.gov/2009/11/vice-president-biden-announces-dot-approval-of-over-10000-recovery-act-projects.html>

## DHS launches critical infrastructure Web site

At the first of a series of recent roundtable meetings with private sector leaders to discuss critical infrastructure security, DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano unveiled a new Web site designed to inform the public about critical infrastructure protection, readiness and resiliency efforts.

During the meeting with leadership from the Sector Coordinating Councils of the Energy, Nuclear, Water and Chemical Sectors, Secretary Napolitano also promoted "vigilance, preparedness and risk reduction."

Two additional sessions are scheduled in the next two weeks focusing on public health, transportation, government facilities, information technology, communications, postal and shipping, national monuments and icons, manufacturing, and agriculture and food, emergency services, and defense industrial base sectors, among others.

The Web site features a link to the new Critical Infrastructure and Key Resources (CIKR) Center. The CIKR Resource Center includes information about

how to sign up for free Web-based seminars on the tools,

trends, issues, and best practices for infrastructure protection and resilience; resources concerning potential vulnerabilities for chemical facilities; and details about the National Response Framework, which outlines guidance for all response partners to prepare for and provide a unified response to disasters and emergencies.

For additional information, please see the following DHS website: [www.dhs.gov/criticalinfrastructure](http://www.dhs.gov/criticalinfrastructure)





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### Famous Quote of the Day:

"It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it."

--Aristotle,  
Greek philosopher

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Information provided is a compilation from other news and on-line media sources, any information relayed is based upon the accuracy of the information provided by other news gathering organizations and does not necessarily reflect the views or positions of the Federal Highway Administration or the State of Texas Border Partnership Working Group.

## Talking Freight Web Seminar on December 16th

The Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Office of Freight Management and Operations and the Office of Planning host the "Talking Freight" web seminars. These web seminars are part of a broader Freight Professional Development Program (FPD) aimed at providing technical assistance, training, tools, and information to help the freight and planning workforce meet the transportation challenges of tomorrow.

The Talking Freight seminars are sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and are held via web conference. This means that you view the PowerPoint presentations over the Internet while listening to the presenters over the telephone. The FHWA "Talking Freight" web seminars are held on a monthly basis throughout the year and are open at no cost to all interested parties in both the public and private sectors. The next FHWA HQ's Talking Freight Seminar will be held on December 16th from 12-1:30 PM (CST) and will

cover the topic of "Freight Fee Structures"

Hear about fee structures that are in place, their intent, and whether or not they have been successful. How do they connect to the State DOT/ MPO functions and what role should they play? Presenters will include Michael Fischer of Cambridge Systematics, Inc.; and Steve Williams of Maverick Transportation; among other presenters TBD.

To register for this free web seminar, please go to <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/freightplanning/registration.htm> and click on the seminar topic.

### EDITOR'S NOTE:

The FHWA "Talking Freight" monthly webinar series is now eligible for AICP certification maintenance (CM) credits for AICP members through the American Planning Association. Credits can be claimed at: <http://www.planning.org/cm/search/provider.htm?ProviderCompanyID=246167>

For additional information please contact Ms. Carol Keenan of FHWA HQ's at: [carol.keenan@dot.gov](mailto:carol.keenan@dot.gov).

## TRB Releases Special Report 298 "Driving and the Built Environment"

A recent report by the Transportation Research Board (TRB) on land use impacts on driving and greenhouse gas emissions finds that significant increases in more compact, mixed-use development will result in only modest short-term reductions in energy consumption and emissions, but these reductions will grow over time.

TRB Special Report 298, "Driving and the Built Environment," was requested by Congress and funded by the U.S. Department of Energy. Marlon Boarnet, of the University of California, Irvine, who is a member of the TRB Committee on the Relationships Among Development Patterns, Vehicle Miles Traveled, and Energy Consumption, briefed the

AASHTO Board of Directors on the report at the AASHTO Annual Meeting on October 26th. The report maintains that the reduction in vehicle miles traveled, energy use, and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions resulting from more compact, mixed use development would be in the range of less than one percent to eleven percent by 2050.

The report cites a more moderate scenario which assumes 25 percent of new housing will be in more compact development. In that case savings in fuel use and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions would be less than one percent both in 2030 and 2050. For a copy of this report see the following web-link : <http://www.TRB.org/Publications/Public/Blurbs/162093.aspx>.