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States vying for first ARRA rail grants

September 2- Applications are in for the first batch of federal high-speed-rail grants financed largely by \$8 billion in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds. An unofficial round-one tally shows states are seeking about \$6.6 billion. That is far below the \$102.5 billion in "pre-applications" states filed in July, but it reflects the first round's emphasis on individual projects that are ready to start. Moreover, with the construction industry struggling, the new applications represent a substantial amount of potential infrastructure work, including bright possibilities for engineering firms. The dollars are expected to be even larger in the next round of applications, which will cover high-speed corridor plans.

New Jersey is applying for \$38.5 million in design funds to replace aging Portal Bridge (above) over Hackensack River with new, twin-span \$1.3-billion crossing (below). The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) at the time of this article had not released an official count of round one applications received and dollars requested by the Aug. 24 deadline. But the blog Transport Politic says a survey of public announcements shows at least 19 states had applied for a total of \$6.61 billion. FRA now will begin to evaluate the submissions and plans to announce the winners in October.

"This first round is going to be really focused on the recovery side of the recovery act," says Karen Rae, FRA deputy administrator. She says that means "projects that are ready to go." The federal program includes four grant categories, or "tracks." Round one includes Tracks 1, 3 and 4. Track 1 grants will fund final design or construction of projects that are ready to begin and can be finished within two years of the grant award. Track 1 projects would receive up to 100% federal funding but must have completed preliminary engineering and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation, such as a final environmental impact statement. Track 1 grants also can fund contracts to complete the environmental studies and preliminary engineering for such projects. Track 3 aid is for advance planning and requires a minimum 50% nonfederal matching share. Track 4 grants give states another way to finance individual ready-to-go projects but require at least a 50% nonfederal match.

"To the extent that the pre-applications represented a vision of where states want to go in high-speed rail, I think the Track 1 applications represent a much more realistic view of what is actually ready for construction and implementation," says one industry official. The source adds that FRA "got the message out that NEPA

is real, that it cannot be ignored....I think that severely limited the dollar volume of projects that could be implemented within a two-year time frame."



The dollars are expected to go up in the rail competition's next round, for Track 2 grants funding new high-speed corridors. Rae says, "We think the bigger bang will come in the corridor projects," for which applications are due on Oct. 2. Al Engel, AECOM vice president and director for U.S. high-speed rail, says the corridor proposals will be much larger than those in the first round. "We go up another three orders of magnitude," Engel says. "We're calibrating in billions." Still, the first-round applications aren't chicken feed. Texas is seeking what appears to be the largest amount, \$1.8 billion. Of that, \$1.7 billion is for the "Texas T-Bone" plan, which includes a line from the Dallas-Fort Worth area to San Antonio, with a connecting line to Houston.

California ranks second, with applications totaling \$1.15 billion. Funds would go for improvements to existing passenger rail lines that could eventually link up to a \$46-billion, 800-mile Los Angeles-to-San Francisco service that advocates say would be capable of traveling up to 220 miles per hour. The largest item among California's applications is \$400 million toward a \$1.5-billion underground "Trainbox" at the San Francisco Transbay Terminal. ARRA funds would finance construction of a landing for an underground station that would serve existing commuter-train and eventually, high-speed-rail passengers.

For additional information on FRA Recovery Act rail grants, please see: <http://www.fra.dot.gov/us/content/2153>

URL website: http://enr.ecnext.com/coms2/article_intr090902ARRARailGran-1

Authors: Tom Ichniowski, Aileen Cho, and J.T. Long
Date: 09/02/09

OIG Audit: Mexican truck safety rules still unmet

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) Office of Inspector General (OIG) recently released an audit that says more work is needed to ensure the safety of Mexican trucks and buses awaiting permission to drive on U.S. roadways.

The U.S. DOT inspector general made public its latest report on Mexican truck and bus safety last Wednesday. The U.S. DOT audit says some states are not consistently reporting traffic convictions of people driving in the U.S. with Mexican drivers' licenses. Also, bus inspections are not being done, are done infrequently or have other problems. The OIG audit says officials have made headway on other safety measures.

Daily bus inspections were not being conducted at border crossings at Calexico and San Ysidro in California and Laredo and McAllen-Hidalgo Bridge in Texas, the U.S. DOT inspector general's office said in its report. At the San Ysidro and Laredo crossings, bus inspections were being carried out on the road's

shoulder within inches of moving passenger buses, the report said. "These constraints lessen the impact border inspections have as a deterrent to unsafe buses entering the United States," the OIG report said.

The North American Free Trade Agreement granted Mexican trucks and buses access to American roadways. Congress has refused to comply because of safety and job loss concerns. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) which oversees safety monitoring for Mexican trucks and buses, agreed with all recommendations made by the inspector general's office. In a written response to the audit the FMCSA said it was working with U.S. Customs and Border Protection in order to improve space for bus inspections.

URL: http://www.newsvine.com/_news/2009/09/02/3219026-auditor-mexican-truck-safety-rules-still-unmet



August 28— As part of an ongoing national Public Broadcast Station (PBS) documentary series on the country's infrastructure entitled "Blueprint America", correspondent Miles O'Brien looks at the unmet transportation needs of the United States.

The majority of American goods are transported by trucks, even though freight trains are greener and more fuel-efficient. Where should America be placing its bets for moving our economy and what would you personally sacrifice for it?

This week, correspondent Miles O'Brien looks at the contemporary needs, challenges, and solutions for transporting vital cargo across America, and how those decisions affect the way you live, work, and travel.

[Infrastructure in Your State](#)

What are the most pressing and dangerous infrastructure issues where you live? See an interactive American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) report card at: <http://www.infrastructurereportcard.org/states> to find out more about your state.

Blueprint America/The NewsHour:

For a report from Chicago on the state of America's freight rail network, please see the "Choke Point" report at: <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/blueprintamerica/reports/slow-train-coming/video-full-report/547/>

[Driven to Despair](#)

For a report on the high price people are paying, in both dollars and quality of life, just to get to work, please see: <http://www.pbs.org/shows/440/index.html>. For additional information on the year-long "Blueprint America" PBS series on America's infrastructure please see the following web site: <http://www.pbs.org/shows/535/index.html>

[Related Web Sites](#)

-American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE): Report Card for America's Infrastructure at : <http://www.infrastructurereportcard.org/>



AASHTO has posted on its Transportation TV web site a recent interview it conducted with Veteran House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee member Rep. Bob Filner, D-CA, shares his views on what it will take to pass legislation to raise the national gasoline tax to pay for highway and transit programs. See more at: www.transportationtv.org

NAFTA surface trade plunges 31.5% in June

August 31— Surface transportation trade among the United States, Canada and Mexico plunged 31.5% in June from a year earlier, though rose from May, the Department of Transportation Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) said Monday.

The downturn was the sixth straight year-over-year monthly decline of at least 27% among the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) partners. Trade rose 6% in June from May, DOT's Bureau of Trade Statistics said in its monthly report.

Total truck imports to the United States fell 26.8% to \$17.9 billion, while exports fell 23.9% to \$18.9 billion. Rail imports plunged 47.2% to \$4.3 billion, while exports fell 40.1% to \$2.7 billion. Pipeline imports fell 50.5% to \$3.7 billion, while exports declined 50.6% to \$219 million. U.S.-Canada trade fell 36.6% to \$31 billion. The value of truck imports to the U.S. fell 34.8%

and the value of truck exports fell 28.8%. U.S.-Mexico trade fell 21.8% to \$19.7 billion. The value of truck imports fell 18% and the value of truck exports fell 14.3%. Surface transportation consists largely of freight movements by truck, rail and pipeline. About 90% of U.S. trade among NAFTA partners moves by land.

Source: Transport Topics

URL website: <http://www.ttnews.com/articles/basetemplate.aspx?storyid=22641>

Date: 08/31/09

Long Beach port seeks public input on planned on-dock rail facility

September 2— This month, the Port of Long Beach, Calif., will hold several public hearings to review a proposal aimed at increasing the use of on-dock trains and reducing the number of local truck trips in the region.

The port plans to build an on-dock rail support facility to reduce train bottlenecks and boost on-dock rail usage. Loading and unloading cargo within the port will significantly reduce regional short-haul truck trips, port officials said in a prepared statement.

The facility would potentially redevelop and expand an existing rail support facility in the vicinity of 9th Street and Pier B Avenue, according to the port. Including new tracks, the facility would stretch from the Alameda Corridor to Ocean Boulevard.

The port has released a "notice of preparation," the first step in launching an environmental review process for the on-dock facility. Port officials are soliciting public comments for a draft environmental impact report.

Send written comments to:

Richard D. Cameron
Director of Environmental Planning
Port of Long Beach

925 Harbor Plaza
Long Beach, CA
90802

If you have questions, call Stacey Crouch at (562) 590-4160.



The full Notice of Preparation is available online at www.polb.com/railNOP

For additional information, please see the Port of Long Beach website at: <http://www.polb.com/news/displaynews.asp?NewsID=596&targetid=1>

The Port of Long Beach recently announced that it is also seeking ideas from transportation planners for developing zero-emission systems to shuttle containers between marine terminals and near-dock rail yards. (See related article, page 6 of this e-newsletter)

EPA awards Recovery Act funds to clean diesel finance program

August 27—The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has announced the awarding of \$20 million in Recovery Act grants through the SmartWay Clean Diesel Finance Program to support the purchase of new, cleaner or retrofitted vehicles and equipment.

In 2009, EPA's National Clean Diesel Campaign is distributing funding for clean diesel activities through two separate funding sources:

- the [American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 \(Recovery Act\)](#) (\$300 Million), and
- EPA's Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 Appropriations.

An expedited process is currently underway for distribution of the Recovery Act funding. The distribution of the FY 2009 Funding will occur later this year. Both funding sources are authorized by the National Clean Diesel Emissions Reduction Program which was created under Title VII, Subtitle G (Sections 791

- 797) of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, Public Law 109-58, signed August 8, 2005 (EPAAct). The National Clean Diesel Emissions Reduction Program is sometimes referred to a "DERA".

EPA grants were awarded to three communities: the Houston-Galveston Area Council for a revolving fund to clean up trucks at the port of Houston; Cascade Sierra Solutions in Oregon for revolving loan, lease, or bond programs to replace or upgrade older diesel trucks; and Louisville Jefferson Metro County Government for a revolving loan program to replace, repower, or retrofit older construction, agricultural, or other nonroad diesel equipment.

For additional information, please link to the U.S. EPA [news release](#) and the [SmartWay Clean Diesel Finance Program](#) website at: <http://www.epa.gov/otaq/diesel/grantfund.htm>

Energy department awards \$300 M to cities for alternative-fuel vehicles

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) announced Aug. 26 the award of \$300 million in grants under the Clean Cities program to develop alternative-fuel vehicles and technologies that will reduce dependence on petroleum in the transportation sector. The federal grants will come from economic stimulus funds (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, Pub. L. No. 111-5). DOE Secretary Steven Chu in a statement called the stimulus money "a down payment on a clean energy future."

DOE Secretary Chu was joined by Vice President Joe Biden, who oversees the Recovery Act program for the administration, at DOE headquarters to make the announcement in an auditorium filled mostly with agency personnel. The funds will help state and local Clean Cities coalitions find alternatives to petroleum-based fuels for buses, trucks, and taxis, Chu said.

The DOE grants will come with a cost-sharing requirement of almost \$2 for every federal dollar, so the project recipients will be required to contribute almost \$600 million themselves. Chu said some of the DOE funds will put more than 9,000 alternative fuel and energy-efficient vehicles on the road and will establish

542 refueling stations across the country. The program covers light, medium, and heavy-duty vehicles. DOE has selected 25 projects to be funded. The exact amounts and final details still have to be negotiated between DOE and each recipient, agency officials said.

The department estimates the 25 projects will help displace about 38 million gallons of petroleum each year. In one program, the Southern California Association of Government's Clean Cities Coalition will add 55 E-85 fueling stations throughout California. E-85 is an alternative fuel blend of 85 percent ethanol and 15 percent gasoline.

The E-85 stations will be placed in the areas with the highest concentration of flex-fuel vehicles. DOE estimates the initiative will help displace approximately 3.5 million gallons of petroleum annually. The DOE grant is almost \$7 million. Chu said the Clean Cities program gives state and local governments the tools they need to build "a greener transportation system" that will help meet President Obama's goal of transitioning to a clean-energy, low-carbon economy.

For additional information, please see: <http://www.energy.gov/news2009/7843.htm>

Webcast: CARB 'SmartWay' rule to be explained Sept. 14

September 3—The California Air Resources Board (CARB) has approved some complicated regulations for trucking carriers to decipher.

In order to explain its rules, CARB occasionally airs discussions of the rules and broadcasts them on the agency's web site.

Truck owners have their next opportunity to hear a CARB explanation on Sept. 14, when it will Webcast an informational session on the Heavy-Duty Vehicle Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction Regulation.

CARB's heavy-duty greenhouse gas rule, formerly known as the SmartWay rule, requires a combination of low-rolling resistance tires and aerodynamic equipment to be attached to trucks and trailers during the next few years.

All heavy-duty diesel trucks that pull 53-foot trailers are required to be equipped with SmartWay-verified low-rolling-resistance tires by Jan. 1, 2012.

2011 model year and newer tractors that pull 53-foot trailers must have the low-rolling-resistance tires by Jan. 1, 2010.

Fifty-three foot trailers that are 2011 MY and newer must be either SmartWay-certified or retrofitted with some combination of SmartWay-verified technologies that can include trailer rear fairings, trailer side skirts, trailer front gap fairings or other

technologies.

The regulation does not apply to:

- Custom extended sleeper cab tractors;
- Drayage tractors and trailers that operate within a 100-mile radius of a port or intermodal rail yard;
- Curtain side vans; and
- Container chassis.

The session will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Pacific time, Monday, Sept. 14 at the Byron Sher Auditorium, 1001 I Street, Sacramento, CA. It also will be Webcast at www.calepa.ca.gov/broadcast.

For more information about SmartWay technologies, contact the SmartWay Partnership Program at 734-214-4767 or email smartway_transport@epa.gov. The program's web site is www.epa.gov/smartway/. Information on CARB's loan program is also available at: www.arb.ca.gov/ba/loan/on-road/on-road.htm.

For additional information, CARB's diesel hotline is available at 1-866-6DIESEL (634-3735) or visit the agency's Web site at www.arb.ca.gov/cc/hdghg/hdghg.htm.

Source: Land Line Magazine

Author: Charlie Morasch Date: 09/03/09

URL Website: http://www.landlinemag.com/todays_news/Daily/2009/Sept09/083109/090309-05.htm

TxDOT unveils web site for road congestion information

The Texas Department of Transportation unveiled new web site tools on its home page, enabling visitors to interactively examine lists of congested roadways in the state, look up pavement condition ratings and see how the maintenance funds spent in their area will impact their roadways. The tools, which are linked to the department's project tracker, were created at the direction of the State of Texas Legislature.

The idea of sharing congestion data with the public is not new - the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) at Texas A&M University has long-distributed reports on congestion levels throughout the United

States, including those levels in Texas. While TxDOT tracks pavement quality scores, the Center for Transportation Research (CTR), at the University of Texas, provided the information to determine the impact of maintenance expenditures based on a formula developed by their researchers.

To utilize the TxDOT web site, please visit: http://www.dot.state.tx.us/project_information/default.htm

Port of Long Beach Seeks Zero-Emission Systems

Request for ideas goes out to transportation planners

The Port of Long Beach is seeking ideas from transportation planners for developing zero-emission systems to shuttle containers between marine terminals and near-dock rail yards.

The goal is to replace diesel-powered trucks that shuttle thousands of containers a day to the Intermodal Container Transfer Facility with a system that generates no pollution.

"We plan to challenge current technology, and if we are successful, we will begin a new era in cleaner, faster freight movement with wide opportunities for applications nationwide," said Robert Kanter, the port's managing director of environmental affairs and planning.

Diesel trucks and some trucks powered by alternative fuels such as liquefied natural gas currently shuttle containers between the Los Angeles-Long Beach port complex and the ICTF, located about 4.5 miles from the harbor. The ICTF handles about 600,000 lifts per year and Union Pacific Railroad, its operator, has applied for permission to expand the capacity.

BNSF Railway is going through the permitting process to construct its Southern California Intermodal Gateway adjacent to the ICTF. That near-dock rail transfer yard would have a capacity of about 1 million lifts a year.

The ports, along with the Alameda Corridor Transportation Authority, intend to encourage the development of new technology to shuttle containers to and from the near-dock rail yards.

Sept. 15 is the last day for submission of new technology concepts. Examples of ideas for a zero-emission container mover system include electric guideways, zero-emission trucks or electrified rail.

The project management team that issued the "request for concepts and solutions" includes representatives from both ports and ACTA. The teams will also solicit advice from a panel of outside, independent experts.

URL website: <http://www.joc.com/node/413224>

Author: Bill Mongelluzzo

Source: The Journal of Commerce Online - News Story

Date: 09/02/09

CSA★2010

Comprehensive Safety Analysis

The Comprehensive Safety Analysis 2010 (CSA 2010) is a new Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) safety program developed in order to improve large truck and bus safety and ultimately reduce crashes.

CSA 2010 introduces a new enforcement and compliance model that allows FMCSA and its State partners to contact a larger number of carriers earlier in order to address safety problems before crashes occur.

When the program is fully rolled out by the end of 2010, FMCSA will have a new nationwide system for making the roads safer for commercial motor carriers and the driving public alike.

For additional information regarding CSA 2010, please visit the new Web site dedicated to this program at: <http://csa2010.fmcsa.dot.gov/>

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION TEXAS DIVISION

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Famous Quote of the Day:

"I hope for an America where we can all contend freely and vigorously, but where we will treasure and guard those standards of civility which alone make this nation safe for both democracy and diversity..."

--Edward Moore "Ted" Kennedy,
U.S. senator
(1932-2009)

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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.

Next FHWA HQ's Talking Freight Web Seminar (Wednesday, September 16 2009)

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" 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 September 16 2009 from 12-1:30 PM (CST) and will cover the topic of "Institutional Arrangements" Public and private entities engaged with the nation's freight system have a strong desire to create ef-

fective mechanisms for planning, financing, and implementing freight projects. The ability to bridge the public and private sectors and address freight needs that stretch across regions and states have emerged as significant factors in developing effective institutional mechanisms.

Hear about recent efforts to identify structures the public sector can employ to administer and fund the implementation of multi-state/multi-jurisdictional freight transportation projects and about a set of tools being created for use by the freight community when advancing institutional arrangements for freight projects.

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

AASHTO launches website on reducing transportation GHG emissions

AASHTO has launched a new website that describes strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from transportation, with a goal of reducing emissions in the United States by 80 percent by 2050, compared to 2005 levels.

The website provides information on four strategies: reducing the annual growth in driving, shifting to fuels that produce low or zero carbon dioxide emissions, increasing vehicle fuel effi-

ciency, and improving the efficiency and operation of the transportation system.

The website includes best practices, state examples, research findings, videos, a companion brochure, and links to other climate change resources. For additional information, please see the following AASHTO website: <http://www.transportation1.org/RealSolutions/>



Real Transportation Solutions for
Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions

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STATE HIGHWAY AND
TRANSPORTATION OFFICIALS
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