

Tennessee's Infrastructure Receives "C" Grade

*American Society of Civil Engineers, TN Section releases
state's first infrastructure report card*

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(Nashville, TN) The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), Tennessee Section released Tennessee's first infrastructure report card today at Legislative Plaza. The 2009 *Tennessee Infrastructure Report Card* evaluates nine areas of infrastructure: aviation, bridges, navigable waterways, parks, rail, roads, schools, transit and water/wastewater. Tennessee's overall infrastructure grade is a C, higher than the national infrastructure grade of a D assigned by ASCE in the 2009 *Report Card for America's Infrastructure*.

"A healthy infrastructure is the backbone of a healthy economy. In these challenging times, infrastructure is essential to reviving Tennessee's economy and maintaining our high quality of life," said Garland Rose, ASCE TN Section spokesperson.

The *Report Card* shows Tennessee's infrastructure is deteriorating and is in critical need of maintenance and improvement to meet current and future demands. While the conditions of Tennessee's roads, bridges and airports are better than the conditions nationwide, Tennessee's public park facilities lag behind the rest of the country.

"To begin addressing our state's infrastructure needs, we need to establish a comprehensive, long-term infrastructure plan that includes a steady funding mechanism, sound technology, wise community planning and involved citizens willing to partner with the government and private sector," added Rose.

Tennessee's infrastructure received an overall grade of C, with individual grades assigned in nine infrastructure categories:

Aviation: B-

Overall, Tennessee's airport facilities are stable and relatively safe. However, investment of additional revenue sources would provide an optimum level of service and positive economic gains.

Bridges: B-

Tennessee's bridges are in the top 25 percent in the nation for least number of deficiencies, but increasing age and traffic volume, along with inadequate funding, present major issues for the state.

Navigable Waterways: C-

Navigable waterways are critical to Tennessee's transportation system. Aging infrastructure, including the state's nine navigational locks and dams, are in need of upgrade and repair to remain viable both now and in the future.

Roads: B-

Although Tennessee is known for its well-maintained roads, recent and projected growth in vehicle miles of travel, along with inadequate funding for future maintenance and expansion, present major problems for the state.

Schools: C+

Tennessee's school systems have experienced rapid enrollment growth and must rely on portable classrooms. Estimated costs to upgrade all schools to an adequate condition are \$608 million.

Transit: D

Areas serviced by public transit are somewhat limited in both urban and rural areas of Tennessee. In order to meet the projected 27 percent growth in urban ridership by 2025, additional investments are needed.

Parks: D+

Tennessee's 53 state parks are an important recreational and cultural resource with 30 million visitors annually. Although stable and safe for public use, shortfalls in funding have created nearly \$100 million in maintenance backlogs.

Rail: C

Tennessee's rail network provides limited service within and through the state. Improvements need to focus on expansion of commuter lines in urban areas and short-line freight service in rural areas to better serve residents and industries within the state.

Water/Wastewater: C

Approximately 92 percent of all Tennessee residents are served by regulated public water systems; however, wastewater is treated in less than 500 publicly owned treatment plants. Aging infrastructure causes leakage of potable water, overflows of raw wastewater and difficulty meeting future regulatory challenges.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Tennessee's population grew 26 percent between 1990 and 2007, and this upward trend is expected to continue. With the growing population and subsequent economic growth, heavy demands have been and will continue to be placed on the state's infrastructure.

"Using Tennessee's 2009 *Infrastructure Report Card*, we hope to bring the state of our local infrastructure to the attention of our elected officials in Tennessee and at our nation's capital," said Rose.

The Tennessee Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers represents more than 2,000 civil engineering professionals who live and work in the state of Tennessee. Founded in 1852, the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) represents more than 146,000 civil engineers worldwide and is America's oldest national engineering society.

For more information and a full copy of the Report Card, visit www.tnasce.org.

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