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Asphalt News

NAPA Hails New "Rough Roads" Report from AASHTO and TRIP

National Asphalt Pavement Association

Lanham, MD - The National Asphalt Pavement Association today commended the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials and TRIP on their new joint report, "Rough Roads Ahead: Fix Them Now or Pay For It Later." The publication documents that one-third of the nation's major highways, including interstates, freeways, and major roads, are in poor or mediocre condition, and that roads in urban areas, which carry 66 percent of the traffic, are in much worse shape.

NAPA President Mike Acott praised the comprehensive, unbiased document and applauded its timing. "The nation is facing a host of challenges. As Congress sifts through these challenges and sets priorities, it is vital that our road and highway infrastructure be front and center. AASHTO and TRIP have done an outstanding job of identifying the problems and proposing solutions," he said.

Driving on rough roads costs the average American motorist approximately \$400 a year in extra vehicle operating costs, according to "Rough Roads Ahead." Drivers living in urban areas with populations over 250,000 are paying upwards of \$750 more annually because of accelerated vehicle deterioration, increased maintenance, additional fuel consumption, and tire wear caused by poor road conditions.

"The American people are paying for rough roads multiple times," said Kirk T. Steudle, Director of the Michigan Department of Transportation, at a news conference held to release the report on May 8. "Rough roads lead to diminished safety, higher vehicle operating costs and more expensive road repairs. It costs \$1 to keep a road in good shape for every \$7 you would have to spend on reconstruction. It's another drag on the economy."

Acott said that the asphalt pavement industry has created a program aimed at supporting state Departments of Transportation in their efforts to maintain the highway system and improve pavement conditions. "This is a difficult time for DOTs. The need for good highways to power our economy has never been greater, yet funds for building and maintaining highways are very restricted and the outlook for future funding is uncertain.

"That's why NAPA has put in place a six-point plan to assist DOTs in controlling costs and meeting the needs of the traveling public. We have developed, and continue to develop, educational materials and programs to help DOTs deploy the most cost-effective, sustainable highways possible," he concluded.

NAPA's six-point program for 2009 and beyond includes the following:

- Thin overlays for pavement preservation
- Increased levels of pavement reuse and recycling
- Accelerated deployment of warm-mix asphalt
- Accelerated deployment of Perpetual Pavements
- Decreased costs over the entire life cycle of the pavement
- Sustainable pavement technologies including porous asphalt

It has been well documented that asphalt roads tend to be smoother than other pavement types. In addition to their smoothness advantage, asphalt roads are longer-lasting, quieter, and more sustainable.

The "Rough Roads" report can be viewed in its entirety at the AASHTO website, roughroads.transportation.org.