

## **Missouri ARRA Information Response to FHWA Questions Based on Chairman Oberstar's Request**

From the time the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) was first discussed until it was signed into law, the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) said that it would be "ready to go" with critical transportation projects, and it delivered. MoDOT is committed to putting tax dollars to use as quickly as possible to create and sustain jobs, improve roads and save lives!

Minutes after President Obama signed the ARRA legislation, MoDOT was at work building a new bridge over the Osage River, replacing a decaying structure ahead of schedule. Three other ARRA-funded projects began at the same time. Since then, many more critically needed projects have followed.

The ready-to-go Missouri projects consist of resurfacing highways, rehabilitating or building new bridges, building new roads, providing local pedestrian projects and purchasing of transit vehicles and facilities. It is estimated that these improvements will save approximately 12 lives per year and prevent 61 disabling injuries on Missouri roads. Transportation improvements with ARRA dollars will be made in 87 of Missouri's 100 economically distressed counties.

Missouri was able to turn these projects into job-producing endeavors quickly with 80 percent of the \$662 million in highway and transit funds obligated to date. More than 200 ARRA-funded highway and transit projects are underway and nearly a third have been completed. Contractors working on ARRA projects have reported that these projects have created or sustained more than 9,500 direct on-project jobs along with thousands of indirect and induced jobs. Contractors have further reported that more than \$15 million has been paid to employees working directly on Recovery Act projects and workers would not be employed without these dollars. A Central Missouri contractor recently stated that its private-sector work is off by 75 percent and without ARRA-funded projects it would be laying off employees. Other contractors have told MoDOT that without the work that ARRA has provided, they would be selling equipment and looking to downsize their work force.

Infrastructure does provide a quick turn around for each dollar invested, as demonstrated by the fact that all 50 states met the June 30 "use it or lose it" mandate established in the Recovery Act, and Missouri has shown that its shovel-ready projects can provide jobs and needed infrastructure improvements quickly.

Despite the influx of ARRA money that boosted MoDOT's construction budget to \$1.5 billion in FY 2009, Missouri contractors still face the unknowns of the yet to be established federal transportation bill. The bidding environment in Missouri reflects this. MoDOT has seen an increase in the average number of bidders per project while bid amounts are significantly lower when compared to expected historic cost trends.

In recent years, MoDOT has focused on making improvements to the major highway system – 17 percent of the system's 33,000 miles that carries 75 percent of the state's traffic. "In the last year, we have reached the point where 83 percent of our major highways are in good condition," MoDOT Director Pete Rahn reported, up from 47 percent just five years ago. However, MoDOT's construction budget is expected to fall to \$421 million in 2014, a level at which it will essentially be in a "maintenance-only" mode.

"We are stretching every dollar to pay for additional improvements on some of our worst conditioned roads meaning that Missourians are benefiting from smoother, safer highways," said Rahn. "MoDOT is well aware of the needs on our rural highway system and we are addressing them as best we can with the funds available."

A smoother and safer transportation system – the state has realized a 24 percent decrease in highway fatalities since 2005 – is a big reason why MoDOT's customer satisfaction is soaring. "We've reached the point where 85 percent of Missourians are satisfied with MoDOT, and 24 percent are 'very' satisfied with MoDOT," Rahn said. Long-distance truck drivers responding to a poll in "Overdrive" magazine this year rated Missouri's highways fifth-best in the nation, just four years after calling them the second-worst.

In Missouri, ARRA has provided much needed funding for improvements and has sustained jobs, but there remains much work to improve and hold Missouri's transportation system in "good repair" and some of the tools used to measure this are discussed below as requested:

- *State of Good Repair – How might you define, "state of good repair" for highway infrastructure? Do you have an acceptable condition threshold for your highway infrastructure?*

#### **MoDOT** –

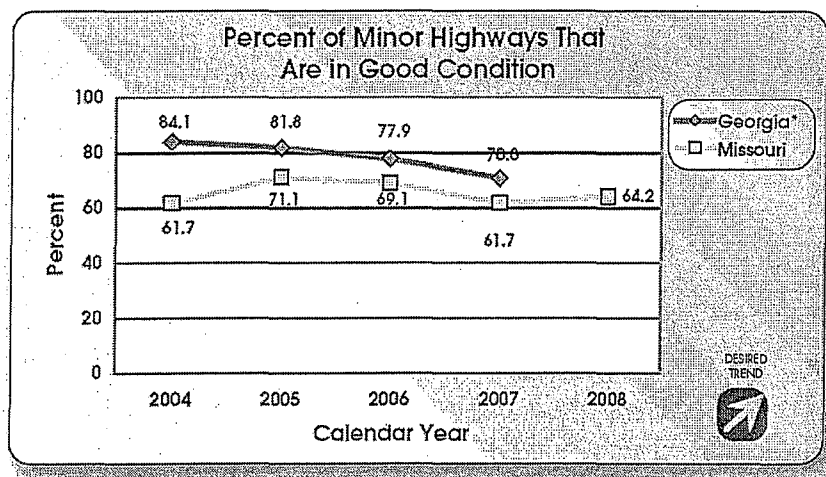
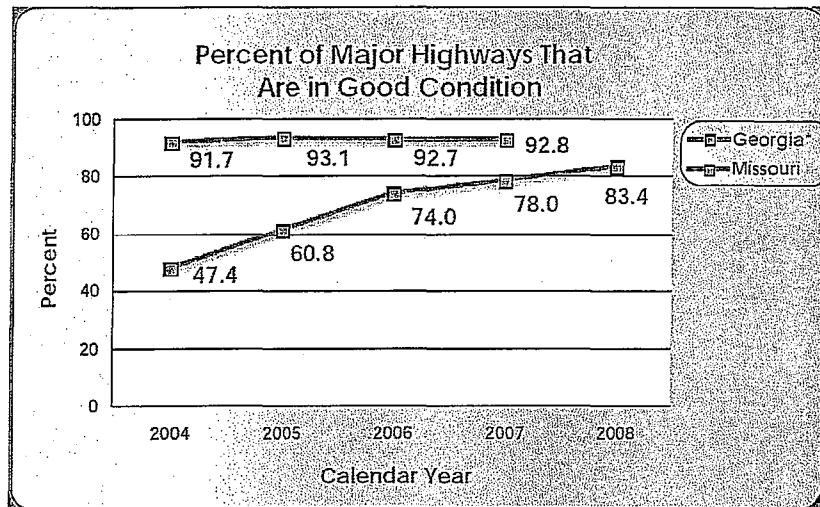
Pavements: On high-speed routes (speed limits greater than 50 mph), the International Roughness Index (IRI) is used. For lower-speed routes (mostly urban areas), a Condition Rating is used. The condition rating is a measure of physical condition.

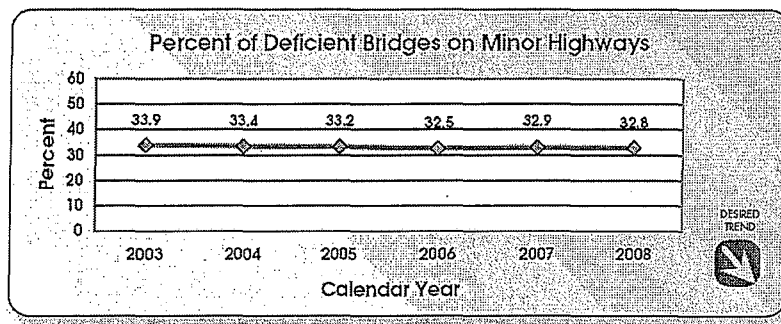
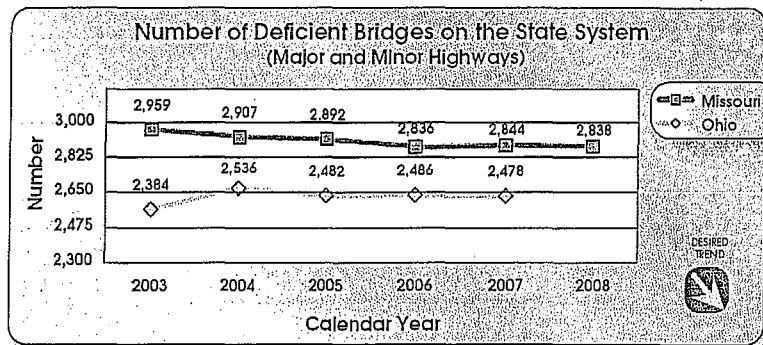
For high-speed routes, the IRI threshold for good is 100 inches per mile or less. The same basic criterion applies on minor roads except we use a higher cutoff for IRI of 140 inches per mile.

Bridges: A bridge is considered deficient if it is either structurally deficient (SD) or functionally obsolete (FO) as defined using Federal Highway Administration criteria. A SD bridge is in poor condition or has insufficient load capacity when compared to modern design standards. A FO bridge has poor roadway alignment or has clearance or width restrictions that no longer meet the usual criteria for the system it serves.

- *Infrastructure Needs – Do you maintain a list of projects that need to be funded to address infrastructure condition needs? Is this list comprehensive (addresses all needs) or does it only include the highest priority needs?*

**MoDOT** – Infrastructure needs are not measured at the project level, but at a system-wide level through the MoDOT performance measurement process known as “Tracker.” Tracker measures the percent of highways on our state system that are in good condition and the number of deficient bridges on our state system as well. See the charts below:





- *Forecasting Needs – Do you have the ability to forecast future needs to improve infrastructure condition? Do you have the ability to predict the anticipated impacts of Recovery Act funds on future pavement and bridge conditions and, if so, have you conducted such an analysis?*

**MoDOT** – We have developed an interactive funding allocation tool that reports the condition of our system based on program funding levels allocated to taking care of our system. We perform this on a program wide basis that includes the Recovery Act funds and all other Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funds as a whole.

- *Recovery Fund Allocation – Do you have a sense of the percentage of your State’s Recovery Act highway funds that are being used to specifically upgrade pavement or bridge conditions? Are you aware of the extent to which local agencies are allocating Recovery Act funds to address pavement and bridge conditions?*

**MoDOT** – Yes, MoDOT allocated the State-level Recovery Act funds of \$525 million in the following manner:

- 44% went towards upgrading pavement and bridge conditions
- 56% went to major projects or system expansion

MoDOT does not have information on the allocation of local agency Recovery Act funds to address their pavement and bridge conditions.

- *Off System Information – Do you have access to highway inventory, project and infrastructure condition information for roadways that are not maintained by your State?*

**MoDOT** – MoDOT has inventory information on the state’s more than 96,000 miles of non-system roads. MoDOT, however, has very little project or infrastructure condition information on local roadways.

- *Impact of Recovery Act – In general, how do you feel that the addition of the Recovery Act funds to your program have impacted your ability to provide for a pavement and bridge network in a state of good repair? Do you feel that your infrastructure conditions will have improved, stayed about the same or deteriorated after your Recovery Act funds have been expended. Why?*

**MoDOT** – Infrastructure conditions have improved. Over 300 miles were improved on our major highway system, which is our more heavily traveled roadways that carry 75 percent of the traffic and over 1,000 miles were improved on the minor road system. This system has been losing ground in condition over the last three years, but Recovery Act funding has allowed us to make improvements on these lower volume minor roads. The minor road system carries about 17 percent of the state’s traffic.

Over 40 bridges were repaired or replaced as well.

The Recovery Act highway infrastructure funding is providing measurable improvements to the Missouri transportation system and sustained employment through direct, indirect and induced avenues. The Recovery Act is measuring impacts to employment to the prime and sub-contractor levels but MoDOT believes the impact extends to an even greater depth that, while difficult to measure, does exist. The Recovery Act has provided much-needed funding for Missouri’s more than 100,000-mile transportation system, but a long-term, sustained funding stream is needed to have a system that is truly in a “state of good condition.”