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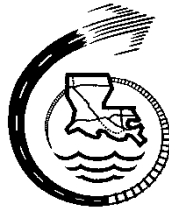
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**Louisiana Good Roads and
Transportation Association**

www.louisianagoodroads.org

Press Release

Lack of investment fuels Louisiana’s “worst roads” ranking

BATON ROUGE – Louisiana’s roads and bridges, listed by a national consumer website as being the worst in the country, will not improve unless the state changes its outdated model of transportation funding, a transportation advocacy group said Tuesday.

The website www.mainstreet.com said Louisiana has the worst roads in the United States based on the percentage of roads in poor condition, number of deficient bridges, the state’s highway fatality rate and congestion. “The state ranked number two in fatalities in 2009 (after Montana), and high marks for poor-condition roads and bridges give it the dubious honor of having the worst roads in the nation,” the report says.

“This is what happens when you fail to adequately fund transportation,” said Ken Perret, president of the Louisiana Good Roads and Transportation Association. “A poor transportation system discourages economic development, it makes our highways more dangerous and it costs drivers money on extra vehicle repairs and time lost in congestion.”

Perret, a former official with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development and the Federal Highway Administration, noted that recent investments through state budget surpluses and federal stimulus programs should improve some roads and bridges around the state, but he warned that citizens shouldn’t expect much to improve unless long-term financial changes are made. Specifically, Perret said the 20-cent motor fuels tax that funds the regular highway program and the TIMED program has not only lost track with inflation but is worth less today than when it was instituted.

“The gasoline tax has less than half the buying power it had back in the 1980s,” Perret said. “Today’s driver is spending much less in gasoline taxes than he did 20 years ago because our cars are much more fuel efficient, so we don’t buy as much gas. That’s a great break for drivers, but you can’t build and maintain a 21st Century infrastructure on a 1989 budget.”

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In 2008, the Louisiana Legislature passed a bill to begin transferring sales taxes collected from new and used vehicle sales directly into transportation projects, but tough budget times forced state officials to abandon that plan. Although some projects are funded through the capital outlay process, the gasoline tax – which is based on volume, not value – remains Louisiana’s main source of transportation funding.

“Louisiana has to get serious about funding transportation or we will never get out of the economic basement,” Perret said. “We know that a good road system is one of the most important factors to businesses that are looking to expand or relocate. What does it say to businesses when we have the worst system in the country?”

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Louisiana Good Roads and Transportation Association (www.louisianagoodroads.org) is a statewide, non-profit organization dedicated to fostering and promoting a program of planning, design, construction and maintenance of an adequate transportation system, sufficiently financed, which will conveniently and safely serve the transportation needs of the people of Louisiana.