



**Idaho's Transportation Funding Conference**  
**Overview and executive summary**  
 11/04/2008

**Purpose**

Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter and the Idaho Transportation Department sponsored seven statewide meetings – *Building Roads, Building Bridges, Building Consensus* – to ask the public how best to pay for repairing, maintaining and improving the state's crumbling roads and bridges.

**Meeting locations, dates and attendance**

A detailed breakdown of attendance is available in each meeting summary.

<u>Location</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
Caldwell	July 14	233
Coeur d'Alene	July 16	184
Lewiston	July 17	118
Idaho Falls	July 22	98
Pocatello	July 23	80
Twin Falls	Aug. 5	118
Boise	Aug. 26 (morning/evening)	282
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,113</b>

**Public awareness effort**

Awareness and attendance of the meetings were promoted by:

- Letters to Idaho Legislators
- Post cards to citizens, interest groups and industry (approximately 14,000)
- E-mails to interest groups and industry
- Newspaper advertisements
- Transportation department web site
- Media interviews
- Media stories

## Meeting participants

Staff members from the Office of Governor Otter and the Idaho Transportation Department met with:

- Mayors and City Councils
- Highway Districts and County Commissioners
- Chambers of Commerce and Industry Leaders
- Legislators
- Public

In addition, Idaho Senator Mike Crapo and Governor Otter hosted a morning session on Aug. 26 that included presentations from national and state speakers.

## Number of comments

<u>Location</u>	<u>Letters/comment sheets/E-mails</u>
<b>Caldwell</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>Coeur d'Alene</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Lewiston</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Idaho Falls</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Pocatello</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Twin Falls</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Boise (morning/afternoon)</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>326</b>

## Summary of comments

Written comments were received at the meetings, through the mail and e-mail. They can be summarized into six statements:

- Idaho's roads and bridges need improvement
- Make certain ITD and local road jurisdictions are efficient
- Phase increases (don't hit us all at once)
- Spread increases across multiple areas (don't hit us in just one place)
- Make increases fair
- Consider how alternative transportation methods (buses, trains and bikes) fit into the system

## Summary of five-question survey

Surveys were distributed at the meetings and were on line at the transportation

department's web site. 251 responses were received.

1. Do you feel that Idaho's transportation needs are adequately funded?
  - No 233
  - Yes 18
  
2. How important are good roads and bridges to Idaho's economy, lifestyle, and safety? (Pick only one option)
  - Extremely important/absolutely vital 210
  - Somewhat important 39
  - Not important 1
  
3. How important should solving Idaho's road and bridge funding problems be in this year's legislative session? (Please choose one)
  - Very important issue 160
  - One of top three most important issues 80
  - Not an important issue 6
  - No opinion 2
  
4. Would you support raising additional revenue to fund Idaho's roads and bridges if you were confident Idaho's transportation agencies are efficient and that proven needs will be addressed?
  - Yes 234
  - No 12
  
5. If you answered "yes," how should the money be raised?
  - Increase fuel taxes 112
  - Increase registration fees 39
  - Raise revenue but not fuel tax 6

## Summary of statewide poll

Elway Research conducted a telephone survey of Idaho residents for Idaho Highway Users, Inc. The survey interviewed residents with driver's licenses to gauge their impressions of the condition of the state's highways, roads and bridges.

Respondents were also asked about the possibility of raising funds to improve Idaho's transportation infrastructure. The drivers also were asked about their driving habits, the importance of roads and bridges to Idaho's economy and their lifestyles, preferences for potential sources of more funding and awareness of the Idaho's Transportation Funding Conferences. The survey shows:

- 95 percent of Idahoans believe roads and bridges are either "vital" or "important" to the economy;
- 93 percent believe roads and bridges are vital or important to Idaho's lifestyle;
- 70 percent of Idahoans said adequately funding transportation is one of the state's top priorities;

- 23 percent said adequately funding transportation is the state's number one priority;
- 62 percent would support raising fees to fund transportation if they were confident the money would be used efficiently.

## **Suggested solutions**

Those who attended the conferences submitted comments and suggestions on how best to finance Idaho's road and bridge maintenance and improvements. The suggestions focused on 11 major areas:

### 1. Efficiency

- Insure efficiency of ITD and local road jurisdictions
- Reduce red tape associated with federal highway funds
- Consolidate highway districts

### 2. Fuel tax

- Increase cents per gallon state fuel tax
- Index cents per gallon state fuel tax
- Add a sales tax to cents per gallon state fuel tax
- Replace cents per gallon fuel tax with sales tax
- Eliminate the ethanol exemption

### 3. Vehicle registrations

- Increase passenger vehicle registrations within current three-tier system
- Collapse passenger vehicle registrations into one flat fee
- Create a valued-based passenger vehicle registration fee
- Index passenger vehicle registrations
- Increase commercial truck registrations

### 4. Sales tax on transportation-related products/services

- Transfer collected sales tax on transportation-related products and services from General Fund to Highway Distribution Account
- Add additional sales tax above the already established rate to transportation-related products and services and direct revenue to the Highway Distribution Account

### 5. Additional user fees

- Place excise tax on rental cars
- Add toll roads
- Develop vehicle miles of travel tax
- Add high occupancy toll (HOT) lanes to I-84
- Impose congestion pricing

### 6. Adjustments to Highway Distribution Account

- Fund Idaho State Police to General Fund
- Allocate General Fund monies annually to transportation

7. Licensing, titling fees

- Increase the drivers' license fee
- Increase the title fee
- Increase the license plate fee
- Increase permit and other misc. motor vehicle fees

8. Fines

- Increase enforcement of "dyed" fuel usage
- Increase fines (and enforcement) for overweight trucks
- Increase fines for those convicted of DUI
- Increase fines for traffic violations

9. Impact fees

- Local jurisdictions/governments assess impact fees to be shared by all transportation jurisdictions

10. Local option tax

- Provide local option taxing authority for transportation-related initiatives

11. Alternative fuel/propulsion

- Create unit of propulsion tax for hybrid, electric, hydrogen/natural gas vehicles