

Additional Funding for Roads and Bridges

The Iowa House adopted the Department of Transportation (DOT) budget bill this week, which provides an additional \$15.6 million for Iowa's highway needs for next year. This includes an additional \$13 million for our roads and bridges.

House File 805 provides the operation funding for DOT. The money comes from the Road Use Tax Fund and the Primary Road Fund, which is the state's portion of the Road Use Tax Fund. This fund is generally made up of gas tax and vehicle registration dollars, and it is constitutionally protected and can only be spent on construction, maintenance, and supervision of Iowa's public highways.

The bill provides an increase of \$7.25 million for fiscal year 2010 for road salt costs, to make sure our roads are drivable during the winter months. It provides over \$200,000 for transportation maps for Iowans and tourists who drive through and visit our state.

For safety reasons, the bill funds the 511 toll-free telephone road and weather reporting system through the Department of Public Safety. It also provides \$120,000 for improvements at various DOT locations to comply with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act.

The bill authorizes a new DOT maintenance garage in Rockwell City to house DOT

trucks that will primarily maintain Highway 20. Last year, a new garage was authorized in Waukon.

An additional \$1.1 million and 20 positions are provided to implement the federal REAL ID Act. This money is contingent upon the state implementing the federal law. REAL ID is a nationwide effort that establishes standards by which state-issued driver's licenses and identification cards are issued. DOT has an implementation extension through December 31, 2009. The REAL ID rules allow a second extension, which defers the requirement to begin issuing the first REAL ID document until May 11, 2011.