

Infrastructure Boost Continues to Create Jobs

Efforts to create jobs and improve Iowa's infrastructure will continue in 2010 after a strong 2009 resulted in a 30% increase in private workers on Iowa Department of Transportation projects.

With a boost in funding at both the state and federal level, the DOT ensured the money was used on critical road and bridge projects across Iowa while helping expand passenger rail in Iowa.

Jobs Money

Iowa received over \$400 million in federal transportation jobs money for all modes of transportation, and has been recognized as one of the top five states for their speed in getting that money out to shovel-ready projects.

The state's I-JOBS initiative, which is funded by state gaming revenues, invested \$115 million in state, city, and county roads, as well as rail, trail, aviation and public transit systems. Every county in Iowa received assistance from I-JOBS.

Passenger Rail

In addition to the \$3 million appropriation from the Legislature for capital improvements and studies to expand passenger rail, the Governor has continued to work in partnerships with neighboring states to expand passenger rail. The department continues to apply for federal funds to assist with those efforts.

Low Fatality Numbers

Early estimates indicate that the number of people who have died on Iowa's roads in 2009 could match 2004's number, 388, which is the lowest fatality number since World War II.

A combination of factors leads to this low number of deaths. An obvious factor is drivers simply being responsible and not putting themselves or others at risk. Close to 20% of persons who died in a crash can be linked to a driver who had drugs or alcohol in their system. The ten-year average for these types of fatalities is near 25%.

DOT continues to put in safety upgrades to roads to make them safer for drivers. These changes include installing cable median barriers as well as shoulder and centerline rumble strips.

Distracted Driver Legislation

As of November 2009, only 11 states have not passed any type of legislation regarding cell phone use or texting while driving. Each additional feature on a mobile device means another possible distraction for drivers, and the harsh results of these distractions has attracted the attention of some legislators.

Legislators differ as to how to apply those restrictions. Some states have passed legislation that only affects school bus drivers, and some states' legislation affects all drivers. Federal government employees are banned from texting while driving.