U.S. Department of Transportation

News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, February 20, 1996

FHWA 17-96
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FHWA REPORTS ROAD CONSTRUCTION COSTS FOR FOURTH QUARTER OF 1995

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) announced today that highway construction costs increased 4.1 percent in the fourth quarter of 1995.

The fourth quarter results raised the FHWA's composite index for highway construction costs to 124.8 percent of the 1987 base index (1987 average costs equal 100 percent).

Increases in the unit prices for reinforcing steel, common excavation, portland cement concrete and structural concrete raised the index in the fourth quarter. There was a decrease in the unit price for bituminous concrete and structural steel.

The three-quarter moving composite price index for the third quarter of 1995 -- obtained by combining data for the first three quarters of 1995 -- increased 0.7 percent from the previous three-quarter average.

Trends in highway construction costs are measured by an index of average contract prices compiled from reports of state highway contract awards for federal-aid contracts greater than $500,000. Since the enactment of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991, the index reflects federal-aid contracts on the National Highway System.

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The composite price indices during the past 2 years and the percentage changes from the preceding quarter have been as follows:

		Quarterly Price Index	Percentage Change	*Three-quarters Moving Index	Percentage Change
*4th Quarter,	1993	110.3	--	109.5	--
1st Quarter,	1994	112.7	2.2	110.9	1.3
2nd Quarter,	1994	111.6	- 1.0	114.3	3.1
3rd Quarter,	1994	121.4	8.8	116.1	1.6
4th Quarter,	1994	116.4	- 4.1	120.2	3.5
1st Quarter,	1995	120.8	3.8	120.5	0.2
2nd Quarter,	1995	121.2	0.3	121.2	0.6
3rd Quarter,	1995	119.9	- 1.1	122.1	0.7
4th Quarter,	1995	124.8	4.1	--	--

* For the three-quarter moving index, these are the middle quarters of the three-quarter periods.

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The price levels of the component items of the quarterly index in the fourth quarter of 1995, the previous quarter, and the same quarter a year ago, and the corresponding percentage changes, are shown in the following table:

	Price Index 1987=100			Percentage Change This quarter (Fourth Quarter 1995) from:	
	Fourth Quarter 1995	Third Quarter 1995	Fourth Quarter 1994	Third Quarter 1995	Fourth Quarter 1994
Excavation	129.7	100.9	107.6	28.5	20.5
Portland cement concrete	150.8	140.9	147.5	7.0	2.2
Bituminous concrete	113.8	126.9	110.4	-10.3	3.1
Composite surfacing	125.9	131.5	122.5	- 4.3	2.8
Reinforcing steel	130.2	121.8	116.5	6.9	11.8
Structural steel	100.9	101.2	107.7	- 0.3	-6.3
Structural concrete	129.6	120.5	115.7	7.6	12.0
Composite structures	122.1	115.6	113.7	5.6	7.4
Composite price index	124.8	119.9	116.4	4.1	7.2

The price levels of the current component items of the three-quarter moving index in the third quarter of 1995, the previous quarter, and the same quarter a year ago, and the corresponding percentage changes, are shown in the following table:

	Three Quarter Moving Price Index 1987=100			Percentage Change This quarter (Third Quarter 1995) from:	
	Third Quarter 1995	Second Quarter 1995	Third Quarter 1994	Second Quarter 1995	Third Quarter 1994
Excavation	112.3	107.1	110.5	4.9	1.6
Portland cement concrete	148.1	151.7	146.1	- 2.4	1.4
Bituminous concrete	119.1	117.9	115.1	1.0	3.5
Composite surfacing	128.7	129.0	125.3	-0.2	2.7
Reinforcing steel	125.3	124.1	115.4	1.0	8.6
Structural steel	103.2	103.4	98.7	- 0.2	4.6
Structural concrete	124.9	124.5	112.8	0.3	10.7
Composite structures	119.3	118.8	109.5	0.4	8.9
Composite price index	122.1	121.2	116.4	0.7	4.9

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The U.S. average contract unit prices for the index items during the various periods shown are:

		Individual Quarters		Three Quarters	
	Unit	3rd Qtr. 1995	4th Qtr. 1995	2nd Qtr. 1995*	3rd Qtr.1995**
Excavation	Cu.Yd.	$ 2.45	$ 3.15	$ 2.60	$ 2.72
PCC surface	Sq.Yd.	20.75	22.22	22.35	21.82
Bit.conc.surf.	Ton	31.38	28.05	29.07	29.37
Reinf. steel	Lb.	0.537	0.574	0.547	0.552
Str. steel	Lb.	0.895	0.893	0.915	0.914
Str. concrete	Cu.Yd.	290.26	312.20	299.72	300.97

* Weighted average unit prices for the first three quarters of 1995.

** Weighted average unit prices for the last three quarters of 1995.

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News:

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, May 28, 1996

FHWA 47-96
Contact: Karen Whitney
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Peña Selects Panel to Pick Nation's First Official Scenic Byways

U.S. Secretary of Transportation Federico Peña recently selected a panel of travel, tourism and historic preservation experts to select the first National Scenic Byways and All-American roads.

National Scenic Byways are roads or highways that states have deemed outstanding and that merit national recognition because of their scenic, historic, cultural, recreational, natural or archeological qualities. All-American Roads are the "superstars" or the best of the National Scenic Byways.

In naming the panel selections, Peña said, "President Clinton and I are strong advocates of protecting the environment and maintaining an efficient, safe transportation infrastructure. Scenic byways are the embodiment of these two goals.

"The blue-ribbon panel that I have selected will help us evaluate the nominations we have received so we can officially introduce America – and the world – to our beautiful, open roads. These roads reflect our country's rich, diverse natural landscape and are often destinations unto themselves. They also illustrate how we can effectively balance economic development with historic and environmental preservation."

The panel members are:

Homer Staves, Vice President of Customer Services, KOA Kampgrounds of America

Peter Brink, Vice President of Program Services Information, National Trust for Historic Preservation

Mike Camarano, Manager of Data Research, American Automobile Association

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Dorothy Redford, Site Manager, Somerset Place, North Carolina

Patty Hubbard, Vice President of National Councils, Travel Industry Association of America

Grant Jones, Principal, Jones and Jones Architects and Landscape Architects, Seattle, Washington

"While we recognize the beauty of our nation's scenic byways, it is also important to note that the value of these roads extends beyond their aesthetic qualities," Federal Highway Administrator Rodney Slater said. "These roads help to boost local economies by spurring and supporting tourism, a $400 billion industry that accounts for 11 percent of consumer spending. In fact, some 90 percent of leisure travelers use our highway system to gain access to national parks, forests, cities or the scenic byways themselves which are among the most attractive places to visit."

The panel members will announce their selections of National Scenic Byways and All-American Roads this Fall.

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Federal Highway Administration

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, May 28, 1996

FHWA 48-96
Contact: Karen Whitney
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FHWA FORMS TWO PARTNERSHIPS TO HELP ADVANCE THE INTELLIGENT TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE (ITI)

Reflecting President Clinton's commitment to rebuild America by investing in our transportation infrastructure, Federal Highway Administrator Rodney E. Slater today announced that two companies, PB Farradyne, Inc. of Rockville, Md., and Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC) of McLean, Va., have been selected to provide technical and program support to help deploy the national Intelligent Transportation Infrastructure (ITI).

The two firms will lead teams that will support the Federal Highway Administration's development of advanced traffic management techniques, traveler information and other activities in connection with the ITI initiative. Transportation Secretary Federico Peña announced the ITI initiative, known as Operation TimeSaver, in January of this year.

"President Clinton and Secretary Peña are committed to excellence in transportation and technology," Slater said. "Through Operation TimeSaver, we aim to provide drivers with dependable and reliable information to help them travel safely and conveniently. We are excited to have two of the nation's most innovative organizations involved in our efforts."

Typical support activities may include the preparation of special studies on congestion management and deployment of ITI, implementation of educational programs for professionals involved in ITI deployment, development of interactive computer-aided instructional tools, and the establishment of a network of experts provided on-call to support state and local government actions for deploying the ITI.

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General Composition of Each Team

PB Farradyne	SAIC
Rockwell International	JHK & Associates
Texas Transportation Institute	Bell Associates, Inc.
Apogee Research, Inc	Comsis, Inc.
North Carolina A & T State University	Electronic Learning Facilitators
Hughes Technical Services	University of Arizona
BRW, Inc.	U. of Florida Transportation Research Center
Daniel Consultants	Florida International University
University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez	George Mason University
Apex Technology	Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities
SRI	University of Minnesota, Center for Transportation Studies
Nossaman, Guthner, Knox & Elliot	Penn State University Transportation Institute
J.M. Morales & Associates	Washington State Transportation Center
Siwek & Associates	Corporate Development Services
Kan Chen, Inc.	Harrington-Hughes Associates
Roper & Associates	ITS Consortium
David Hodge	Scientex Corp
Tom Deen	Howard/Stein Hudson
Richard Hartman	Clark Atlanta University
Tom Horan	Charles River Associates
	KPMG Peat Marwick
	Pacific Rim Resources

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, May 28, 1996

FHWA 49-96
Contact: Karen Whitney
Tel.: (202) 366-0660

FHWA ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF 1996 HIGHWAY SAFETY AWARDS

Federal Highway Administrator Rodney E. Slater today announced the winners of the 1996 Administrator's Highway Safety Awards. The awards program aims to encourage innovation in highway safety by recognizing and rewarding outstanding achievements and practices.

"President Clinton and Transportation Secretary Federico Peña have made safety their top transportation priority. The exceptional entries in the awards competition clearly demonstrate the effectiveness of safety programs and initiatives being undertaken by highway and public safety agencies nationwide," Slater said. "Our partners in the transportation industry are making a crucial contribution toward the reduction of traffic-related deaths and injuries."

The competition drew 45 entries from 20 states. The winners are as follows:

Program Planning, Development and Evaluation Award
New York State Department of Transportation: Goal-Oriented Program Safety Goal
Operational Improvements Award
Washington Traffic Safety Commission: The Corridor Safety Program
Safety Improvements Award
North Dakota Department of Transportation: Drive Slope Flattening Initiative
Most Effective Use of Technology Award
Tennessee Department of Transportation: Fog Detection and Warning System
Special Recognition
Michigan State Police: Michigan Truck Safety Commission

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In announcing the winners, Slater said, "I am inspired by the time and energy expended by all of the participants. I sincerely hope that these safety efforts will continue and that others will be encouraged to initiate additional innovative highway safety programs."

In addition to the five winners, the Iowa Department of Transportation's Mobile Accident Reporting System received an Honorable Mention for program planning, development and evaluation.

Recipients will receive special plaques in recognition of their contribution to highway safety.

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U.S. Department of Transportation

News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday, June 3, 1996

FHWA 51-96
Contact: Karen Whitney
Tel.: (202) 366-0660

FHWA LAUNCHES NATIONWIDE SEISMIC BRIDGE DESIGN TRAINING

In keeping with President Clinton's and Transportation Secretary Federico Peña's commitment to transportation safety, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has launched a national training project on seismic bridge design to provide engineers with information on how to help bridges better withstand earthquakes.

"The United States has approximately 575,000 bridges, many of which are located in areas where earthquakes or tremors could occur," FHWA Administrator Rodney E. Slater said. "Contrary to popular belief, the western states are not the only areas vulnerable to earthquakes. Many other states are also subject to seismic activity and that is why it is critical that the engineers who design and maintain our bridges receive the most comprehensive, up-to-date training possible."

FHWA's seismic training project is a nationwide effort that focuses on the training needs expressed by the bridge engineers themselves. It is designed to ensure uniform application of the seismic design principles prescribed by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). It also will incorporate lessons learned from recent U.S. and international earthquakes.

AASHTO seismic design specifications focus on the relationship of bridge sites to earthquake faults, including the seismic response of soils at bridge sites and the response characteristics of the bridge.

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The training consists of three main components: seismic design examples, national seminars and a "help desk" service. The seismic design examples illustrate how to apply AASHTO's seismic analysis and design requirements on a variety of actual bridges from across the United States. Each example provides a complete set of "designer's notes" covering the seismic analysis, design, and details for a particular bridge along with a thorough commentary that explains each step.

The second component consists of one-day seminars broadcast nationally via satellite. The sessions cover basic seismic principles, seismic analysis and design examples, modeling guidelines and column design features. Fundamental concepts that apply to seismic retrofit are also developed. The first seminar was broadcast from the University of Maryland in April and a second session is scheduled to take place July 25, 1996.

The "help desk" will provide answers to questions about the seismic design examples and the seminars. Help desk staff will also provide technical assistance on actual bridge design projects under development and deliver interactive, personalized training to state bridge engineers' offices.

For more information about the next training session, contact Jim Keeley at (303) 969-5949 or fax (303) 969-6499.

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Washington, D.C.
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News

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, December 7, 1999
Contact: Karen Whitney
Tel.: 202-366-0660
FHWA 76-99

Transportation Researchers Find Unusual Source For Environmentally Friendly Snow and Ice Control

U.S. Transportation Secretary Rodney E. Slater today announced that researchers have discovered how cheap feedstocks, such as cheese whey, can be used to make inexpensive calcium magnesium acetate (CMA), an environmentally-friendly snow and ice control material used for roadway deicing and anti-icing.

Several states use CMA to maintain the safety and efficiency of highways and bridges during the winter months.

"President Clinton and Vice President Gore are committed to protecting the environment and improving safety, their highest transportation priority," Secretary Slater said. "The results of this research can help improve the quality of life in our communities and make them safer for motorists and pedestrians alike."

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in partnership with the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority and several state highway agencies, funded the research which involves fermenting cheese whey to produce acetic acid which, in turn, reacts with lime to produce CMA. Researchers from Ohio State University's Department of Chemical Engineering conducted the research on behalf of the agencies.

"Some of the largest strides in research come from a willingness to find significance in the seemingly insignificant," FHWA Administrator Kenneth R. Wykle said about the use of the cheese byproduct. "This discovery is tremendously valuable because it illustrates the kind of ingenuity and resourcefulness that will enable us to meet the transportation challenges of the new millennium."

CMA is a mixture of calcium acetate and magnesium acetate and has a deicing ability comparable to salt. Although salt is less expensive, CMA has no significant health or environmental concerns. It is not corrosive to vehicles and not harmful to concrete, structural steel, vegetation, fish or other aquatic life.

Many states have expressed interest in the findings which show that production of acetate from waste liquid whey could provide approximately 1.7 billion pounds per year of low cost CMA and potassium acetate for highway and airport runway deicing and anti-icing materials.

Deicing tests have shown that the whey-based product has an equal or slightly better ice penetration rate than that of commercial CMA. Cost analysis shows that CMA made from cheese whey can be produced

at a cost of less than 30 percent of the current market price for commercial CMA, helping to make environmentally-friendly winter highway maintenance operations more cost-effective. Researchers have also developed methods for producing CMA from sewage sludge with similar results.

The results of this study are documented in a report (FHWA- RD-98-174) titled *Calcium Magnesium Acetate at Lower Production Cost: Production of CMA Deicer from Cheese Whey*.

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Briefing Room

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U.S. Department of Transportation
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News

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, May 21, 2002
Contact: Bill Outlaw
Telephone: 202-366-0660
FHWA 20-02

FHWA Administrator Testifies That Growing Traffic Congestion Threatens Nation's Economy, Quality of Life

In testimony before the House Transportation and Infrastructure's Subcommittee on Highways and Transit, Federal Highway Administrator Mary E. Peters today said that increased traffic congestion is a growing threat to the nation's economy and to the quality of life of all Americans.

In testimony before the subcommittee, which conducted the hearing Tuesday on "Relieving Highway Congestion through Capacity Enhancements and Increased Efficiency," Peters said the U.S. Department of Transportation's goal is to provide the American people with a transportation system that is safe, secure and efficient.

Congestion must be addressed with a long-term strategy to increase capacity, make the system more efficient and preserve the nation's system of roads and bridges, Peters said.

"As (U.S. Transportation) Secretary (Norman Y.) Mineta has said, mobility is one of our greatest freedoms," Peters said. "Unless we manage highway congestion, our nation will continue to incur economic costs in forgone productivity, wasted fuel, and a reduced quality of life. Strategic expansion of our transportation system capacity is necessary in certain instances to address our existing and growing mobility needs."

"When we take appropriate action to address our mobility needs, we can also improve the safety and security of our system and enhance our natural and human environment," Peters said.

"Conversely, we find that we experience decreased safety and a degraded environment when we do not address critical needs on our highway system," Peters continued. "Congestion and bottlenecks damage air quality, slow commerce, increase energy consumption and threaten our quality of life. They waste significant time and money, and they reduce productivity."

She said one of the major reasons for increased traffic congestion is that the system has not kept pace with the growing demands placed on it.

For example, from 1980 to 2000, highway travel increased 80 percent and the number of drivers increased by 30 percent while highway mileage increased only 2 percent. At the same time, 84 percent of the nation's $7 trillion in freight traffic travels on highways, with truck travel expected to grow by more than 3 percent annually over the next 20 years.

In addition, the number of drivers is increasing slightly faster than overall population, and each driver on average is traveling more miles each year. At present, 91 percent of all person-miles traveled in the United States occur in private vehicles on highways. Although passenger travel growth is expected to slow, it nonetheless will grow more than 40 percent over the next two decades.

"Increased capacity, improved efficiency, and proper system preservation have positive effects on the environment, safety, and security of our nation's highways," she said.

Peters stressed that the physical condition of America's transportation infrastructure is improving, in part because of increased federal funding from the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) and the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21).

However, a recent Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) study estimates the cost of congestion in just 68 urban areas has grown from $21 billion in 1982 to $78 billion in 1999 (36 hours per driver a year and 6.8 billion gallons of wasted fuel). The TTI study also estimated that congestion results in 4.4 billion person hours of delay annually in the 68 urban areas it studied.

Peters also testified that highway improvements, where appropriate, can help save lives and reduce traffic crashes.

"Highway improvements are sometimes the best way to reduce crashes, fatalities and injuries on our roads," Peters said. "Removing obstacles, installing barriers and rumble strips, adding passing lanes and widening shoulders will both improve safety and relieve congestion," Peters said.

To enhance the operation of highways, Peters called for increased coordination among agencies responsible for roadway operations, including traffic, public safety, parking, media, and emergency response agencies.

While adding capacity, the FHWA and state and local agencies will continue to work with other modes of transportation, environmental groups and other partners and stakeholders and remain good stewards of the environment.

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