



TRIKO Valley News

Volume 12 , Issue 4 - September 2012

From Our President...



Steve Proffitt
Thelen Associates, Inc.

It is an honor and privilege to serve as the ASHE TRIKO Valley Section President for the 2012-2013 calendar year. I want to begin my term by thanking and recognizing last years President Paul Schoelwer and the other Board Members. Under Paul's leadership, we were able to accomplish many things last year and I plan to continue and expand on that success this year by providing new innovative ideas and interesting program topics for our members while focusing on the transportation/ infrastructure industry.

As we all know, the overall economy is still slowly staggering along, but with the upcoming presidential election, the Highway Bill recently passing and potentially new funding and local leadership pushing forward for a new Brence Spence bridge project, we do have some reasons for optimism and hope both locally and nationally as we move forward this Fall. A few goals I have for this year include getting input from the ASHE members to see how we can improve the TRIKO Valley section and program topics, increase the membership total, receive more submittals for the Schramm awards and to increase the visibility and knowledge of our student chapter.

Our section has great leadership and hard working individuals who will continue to help lead this group moving forward. I welcome any new ideas, input and requests from our members. I look forward to seeing you all at our first lunch program of the year on Tuesday, October 2nd at the Montgomery Inn Boathouse located along the river.

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ASHE - TRIKO Valley Section
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The mission of the American Society of Highway Engineers is to provide a forum for members and partners of the highway industry that supports education, innovation, and fellowship; promoting a safe and efficient highway system for mobility now and in the future.

ASHE TRIKO VALLEY MEETING

General Membership Meeting
Tuesday, October 2, 2012

The Montgomery Inn Boathouse, 11:30 AM

**Two Bridges, One Project:
Louisville-Southern Indiana Ohio River Bridges**

Lunch Cost: \$25.00

*Visit website (www.ashe-trikovalley.com)
and click on Meeting Link to register and pay online*

Advertising Opportunities

\$50/year for small ads, \$150/year for large ad and corporate link on the TRIKO website.
If interested, contact Stan Harris at stan.harris@stantec.com.
Send website logos to Matt Loeffler at loefflerm@bceo.org.

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ASHE PIN Report - Fall 2012

Finally, after multiple extensions, Congress passed the “Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act” or MAP-21 at the end of June, 2012. While everyone is relieved that we finally have a 27-month long transportation bill, the pressing question that was the reason behind the many extensions for the bill, the funding source, has remained unanswered. MAP-21 effectively uses the remaining funds in the Highway Trust fund, approximately \$240 billion, and spends the balance to zero in the 27-month timeframe.

The MAP-21 legislation has some very positive attributes aimed at being frugal with the remaining funds in the Highway Trust Fund. Review processes have been streamlined so that processes that used to be linear in nature can now be run concurrently. In conjunction with set approval deadlines by reviewing agencies, this streamlining is aimed at reducing the timeline of getting approval for a project, thus reducing the overall project costs. Many of the programs in SAFETEA-LU have been consolidated and states have been given more flexibility in administering the federal monies they receive. In addition, funding to the existing Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act program, or TIFIA, will allow states to move forward with projects that were otherwise stalled.

However, Congress did not address the funding sources for the Highway Trust Fund. A few years ago, infusions from the General Fund kept the Highway Trust Fund alive. Yet less than a month after the infusion, suggestions were made to reallocate the funding to housing endeavors. The Highway Trust Fund received its last revenue increase in 1993 that raised the user’s fee on every gallon of gasoline fuel purchased to 18.4 cents per gallon. With the increasing popularity of high mileage vehicles, and a new federal mandate that by 2025 the combined standard for new autos and light trucks would be increased from today’s standard of 29.7 miles per gallon to 49.7 miles per gallon, the trend of revenue decreases to the Highway Trust Fund has been solidified.

What can ASHE members do about the issue?

Many are saying that the answer to the declining revenue stream into the Highway Trust Fund is the Vehicles Users Tax method for collecting fees. This system would change the funding from a set charge per gallon to a set charge per mile, measured at the service station. Pilot studies in Oregon and New Mexico have been promising. Opponents to this change cite possible invasion of privacy with identification at time of payment. However, in this age of smart phones, is this really an issue anymore? To save the Highway Trust Fund, ASHE members need to advocate for a change in the collection method of the gasoline tax. **We have 24 months before the Highway Trust Fund is bankrupt. Now is the time to ACT!** Contact your Congressional Representatives; write letters to your newspaper editors; blog on the internet; post on LinkedIn and Facebook; and talk to you colleagues, friends, and family. We need a funding solution for the future of our transportation system!



General Membership

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