

Op Ed – Response to Editor RE: Transportation Funding

To Vincent Carroll, editor or editorial page (carrollv@RockyMountainNews.com)

Your editorial on Wednesday, 12/3, “Roads to Ruin?”, demonstrated a lack of awareness regarding the Governor’s efforts to properly evaluate and obtain funding for infrastructure. You said, “Ritter has never asked Coloradoans whether they want to spend more on transportation...” This is misleading and not accurate.

On behalf of all Coloradoans, Governor Ritter assembled a “Transportation Summit” in 2007 of several hundred representatives of *ALL* kinds of “Coloradoans” to discuss and study the infrastructure needs of the state. His “Blue Ribbon Panel” formed from this group has now TWICE made and revised their study, given to the Governor and legislature. In short, it concluded that Colorado needs \$1-1.5 *BILLION*/year just to *maintain* our roads and bridges, let alone expand or improve them. It also concluded that, over the next 20 years, we need \$120-160 *BILLION* to bring the infrastructure up to a “good” rating. This is widely known and has been reported by the Rocky Mountain News.

Moreover, this week, in Colorado Springs, at the winter meeting of Colorado Counties, Inc., warnings were given by county commissioners that if the legislature does not act quickly to help Colorado roads, local governments might feel forced into forming regional transportation authorities to address these needs. Moreover, CDOT head Russ George said that the \$800 million still allotted to CDOT next year is equivalent, when adjusted for inflation, to the amount of money the state spent on transportation in 1983, when 2 million fewer people lived here!

The real issue here is the fact that Colorado’s roads are in terrible condition and will get exponentially worse the longer it takes to repair and rehabilitate them. Coloradoans need to spend their own money (yes, that mean some forms of taxes), and get federal government money, to start the years of needed work.

Sincerely,

Tom Peterson
Executive Director
Colorado Asphalt Pavement Association (“CAPA”)