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LAKE TAHOE SUMMIT: OPPORTUNITY FOR TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS

(Stateline, NV.) – The 15th Annual Lake Tahoe Summit at Homewood Mountain Resort, August 16, provides an opportunity for pivotal transportation concerns to be addressed, according to Carl Hasty, District Manager, Tahoe Transportation District.

“With the potential loss of federal funding for projects as a result of both Nevada SB-271 and the inaction on reauthorization of the transportation bill in Washington, we need to examine immediate and long-term options to guarantee the safety, economic and environmental impacts of the legislation,” noted Hasty. (SB-271 is legislation that would sever ties between Nevada and the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, thereby jeopardizing federal transportation funding.) Hosted by U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., with appearances from the governors of California and Nevada, the conference will focus on restoration of the Lake. The theme of the Summit is “Stewardship and Sustainability in Challenging Fiscal Times.”

“While the spotlight is focused on Lake Tahoe it’s imperative that we present the concerns and realities related to transportation issues here,” said Hasty. “With transportation systems causing up to 70% of the particulates affecting lake clarity, the need for a joint regional effort is obvious. As a major tourism destination for residents of our respective states, it’s imperative that we work together and develop a stronger and unified voice for our regional transportation needs.”

Hasty lists the following as proof for prompt attention:

- A Federal Highway Administration study* concludes that for each \$1 billion of federal spending on highway construction nationwide nearly 28,000 jobs are generated annually, including approximately 9,500 in the construction sector, approximately 4,300 jobs in industries supporting the construction sector, and approximately 14,000 other jobs induced in non-construction related sectors of the economy.
- The Federal Highway Administration* estimates that each dollar spent on road, highway and bridge improvements results in an average benefit of \$5.20 in the form of reduced vehicle maintenance costs, reduced delays, reduced fuel consumption, improved safety, reduced road and bridge maintenance costs and reduced emissions as a result of improved traffic flow.
- The gas tax, the primary source for both California’s and Nevada’s highway fund hasn’t increased since 1992. The buying power of Nevada’s gas tax has decreased 43% in that time.
- The Federal Highway Administration found that every \$100 million spent on needed highway safety improvements results in 145 fewer traffic fatalities over a 10-year period.
- Since 2004, Nevada Department of Transportation has been unable to fund replacement repairs at a level to maintain current road conditions. Road maintenance is less expensive than replacement.
- According to California state motor vehicle registrations there were 21.9 million motor vehicles registered in 1990. That number had grown to 33.5 million vehicles by 2008.
- In 2010, the Nevada Department of Transportation estimated a budget shortfall at \$8-10 billion for repairs and construction with potential increases.

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- From 1990 to 2005, the number of annual vehicle miles traveled in Nevada increased by 103% from 10.2 billion to 20.7 billion. During the same period, Nevada's total lane miles of highways increased by 12%.

- By 2030, Nevada's population is expected to increase 84% to 4.6 million while vehicle travel will climb 125% to 47 billion miles.

And according to Hasty, that's just a partial list.

"In order to realize the region's potential for economic growth and environmental sustainability, the region will need to improve the conditions of its roadways, bike trails and public transit systems," said Hasty. "Making needed improvements to the transportation system will help support future expansion and competition to help ensure we remain an attractive place to live, visit and do business."

TTD's District Manager stressed the need for immediate action toward long term solutions by pointing out various realities such as the time to construct a road at 7-10 years; that construction now is more affordable than waiting; and pointed out the consequences that postponing can cause continued erosion of infrastructure beyond repair, as well as safety concerns for increased accidents, crumbling roads and bridge disintegration.

"Tahoe Transportation District is focusing on creating public awareness of the area's looming transportation predicament and paying close attention to all ongoing funding discussions to advocate specific solutions," said Hasty. "It will take a cooperative endeavor from various sectors: government, business and the public. While our elected officials have the power to address these issues to make our roads and highways safer, we also need citizens to participate to affect changes."

For details pertaining to the Tahoe Transportation District and its current projects, visit www.TahoeTransportation.org or call 775-589-5500.

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About the Tahoe Transportation District

The Tahoe Transportation District (TTD) is responsible for the implementation and management of transportation projects and programs in the Tahoe Basin. The organization has facilitated many area safety infrastructure projects, including bicycle paths, roadway improvements, pedestrian thoroughfares, water quality and water shed improvements and public transit solutions.

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