

AGC of Minnesota Update to All Members for the Week Ahead (February 6, 2012)

Congress Moving Forward with Transportation Reauthorization

The House Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee has begun consideration of H.R. 7, the American Infrastructure and Investment Act of 2012. The legislation reauthorizes the long-delayed federal transportation act that has been operating on a series of short-term extensions for months. The committee markup was notable for the partisan bickering over the drafting of the bill. No Democrats have co-sponsored the bill.

The bill authorizes approximately \$260 billion over five years to fund federal highway, transit and safety programs, maintaining current funding levels. The bill, [which can be read here](#), makes significant reforms to environmental review and approval processes and give states more flexibility in using federal funds. Some highlights include:

- Consolidating or eliminating nearly 70 federal programs
- Eliminate mandates that states spend highway funding on non-highway activities
- Delegate more project approval to states
- Condense deadlines for federal agency approvals
- Accelerate approval processes for projects in existing right-of-way
- Encourage states to partner with the private sector to finance and build projects
- No project earmarks
- Fund the Transportation Innovative Financing and Investment Act (TIFIA) at \$1 billion per year vs. current \$122 million
- \$2 billion for states to capitalize State Infrastructure Banks
- Allow states to toll new capacity on existing interstates

The bill significantly changes the Highway Trust Fund by eliminating the Mass Transit Account and replacing it with a new "Alternative Transportation Account" to fund the transit program and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) program. Funding for the bill is included in other legislation that redirects the 2.86 cents per gallon of the federal gasoline and diesel fuel taxes, currently going to the Mass Transit Account, to the Highway Account of the Highway Trust Fund. The new "Alternative Transportation Account" would be supported by a transfer of \$40 billion from the general fund with no indication yet how the transfer will be offset.

The House Natural Resources Committee has also passed three energy bills to be incorporated into the transportation bill. Two of the bills require the Interior Department to expand leasing opportunities in parts of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and Gulf of Mexico; a third calls for promotion of shale oil production on public lands. The program funding legislation calls for revenue from the expanded leasing to be directed to the Highway Trust Fund, yielding less than \$10 billion in new revenue, far short of the \$60 billion needed to fund a 5 year bill.

Both the House and Senate are working to get reauthorization bills to their respective floors. Getting a transportation authorization bill passed in Congress and signed into law prior to March 31 will not be easy. It is vital that AGC members engage business associates (suppliers, subcontractors, insurance, bonding, financial services, etc.), labor organizations and other non-construction businesses in this effort. Please join AGC's campaign to [Make Transportation JOB #1](#), and help continue to build momentum for passage of a reauthorization bill.

Mn/DOT Provides Shutdown Claims Update to Senate Committee

Representatives of the Minnesota Department of Transportation were called to testify this week before the Minnesota Senate Transportation Committee and provide an update on the progress to date in resolving the 2011 State Government Shutdown Claims. In making comments to the Committee Assistant Commissioner, Jon Chiglo noted that 165 Mn/DOT projects were impacted by the shutdown and that individual projects could have multiple claims. Fifty-two projects have settled for time extensions only, and 48 projects have settled for time and reserve the right to cost claims at a later date. Twenty-nine claims have been resolved to date for a total cost of \$2.044 Million. Le Center based DBE contractor Lori O'Malley testified regarding the severe impact the claim resolution process has had on her business. Tim Worke (AGC Staff) provided comments addressing the claim process and how the slow resolution of outstanding claims is impacting the Minnesota highway construction industry, stressing the need to urgently resolve all outstanding claims quickly. A copy of Mn/DOT's summary handout is attached.

Changes at MnDOT's Cultural Resources Unit

G. Joseph Hudak retired from MnDOT on January 3. Joe developed and supervised MnDOT's Cultural Resources Unit (CRU), responsible for processing and clearing all federal aid highway projects through the Section 106 (Historical and Archeological) process. The Office of Environmental Stewardship will not be immediately filling Joe's position. Four people will be rotating from the Unit into the Acting Supervisor role over the next year or so, before the position is permanently filled. Beginning now, Teresa Martin will be heading up the staff for the first four-month rotation. Teresa and Laura Kling will be handling all incoming Early Notification Memos (ENM) and distributing the projects for staff review. The ENM will be updated to no longer list Joe as the addressee. You will be notified when this has been accomplished so you can download the new form. Starting now, send your ENMs to this NEW e-mail address: culturalresources.dot@state.mn.us. This will become the standard address for CRU regardless of who is the Acting Supervisor. Do not email or copy Joseph Hudak directly. Joe Hudak, Jr. (Office of Materials and Road Research) will greatly appreciate not being inundated by Cultural Resource email. The Cultural Resource Unit can still be reached at 651-366-3612.

BIM Training in Duluth

Building Information Modeling (BIM) is changing the way projects are constructed. AGC of America has created the BIM Education Program, a four-part series designed to prepare general and specialty contractors to confidently implement BIM on projects. Completion of all four parts and successfully passing an assessment exam will result in a Certificate of Management – Building Information Modeling (CM-BIM). On **February 13**, we will offer part one of the series: BIM 101 – An Introduction to Building Information Modeling. Take just this introductory course to learn the essential concepts of BIM or plan to take the entire certificate program. Information about the complete CM-BIM program and a registration form for BIM 101 are attached. We have

applied for CEU accreditation for this session from the USGBC and AIA.

BIM Units 2 - 4

We will be offering the remaining three units in the BIM Certificate of Management program at the AGC office on the following dates:

February 28 and 29 – Technology (Unit 2)

March 13 – Process, Adoption and Integration (Unit 4)

March 27 – Contract Negotiation and Risk Allocation (Unit 3)

While all four units are required to sit for the certification exam, it is possible to take single units based on an individual's scope of responsibilities. Registration information is attached.

Duluth Professional Development Conference

On **February 23**, we will hold the 1st annual Duluth Professional Development Conference. This event is a restructuring of the former Duluth Safety Day. While there are still some safety-related topics, there is also an emphasis on professional development skills. Registration information is attached.

Spring STP Classes

Spring Supervisory Training Program (STP) classes will begin the week of March 12. Registration information is attached.

Open House for Heavy Highway Contractors

On **February 29**, from 10:30 am to 1:00 pm, the Laborers Training Center (2350 Main Street, Lino Lakes) will host a complimentary open house to include facility tours, an overview of their course offerings, and new apprenticeship policies. Lunch will be provided. All signatory union contractors are invited. Details, including how to register, are attached.

Flagger Train the Trainer

On **March 2**, Mn/DOT will offer a half-day Flagger Train the Trainer course at the Lewis North Conference Center in St. Cloud. Details are attached.

AGC/MSU Mankato Team on CPM Education for Northern Highway Contractors

Highway contractors interested in CPM education for estimators, project managers, and others can receive top quality CPM instruction as a part of a new program being offered through Minnesota State Mankato. The first program will begin in northern Minnesota and will be limited to 10 students. Contact Denise Woods at AGC, 651-796-2186 or dwoods@agcmn.org, for more information. Program location will be in the Hinkley/Cloquet area and will begin as soon as enough registrations are received. The class level, course details, and schedule will be customized to meet the needs of the company and students.

Prevailing Wage Trainings

Mn/DOT is holding contractor Prevailing Wage Trainings around the state in February and March. Information about the sessions, including dates, locations, and how to register is available at <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/const/labor/index.html>.

AGC Bookstore Monthly Featured Products – OSHA Standards for Construction

Through its on-line bookstore, AGC of America offers monthly featured products, available at a discount to AGC members. A link to the bookstore is available through our home page, www.agcmn.org, or at <http://store.agc.org?Affiliateld=AGCO254>.

Compliance in the construction industry is made easy with the most up-to-date OSHA standards. Included you will find the 1903 regulations on inspections, citations, and proposed penalties; the 1904 regulations on recording and reporting occupational injuries and illnesses; pertinent 1910 general industry regulations; and every 1926 construction industry regulation. This handy 29 CFR 1926 volume is made with RegLogic®, which takes the difficulty out of reading and using government regulations. You can use the book's Quick-Find Index™ to quickly access the information you need.

This item is available at a 10% discount through February using coupon code WeeklyFeature.

Projects in the AGC of Minnesota Internet Plan Room (IPR), Powered by iSqFt, on February 3, 2012

Planning: 683, Bidding: 200, New Projects in the last 7 Days: 91, Projects with Plans: 493

Project details, plans, and specs are available at www.isqft.com. Ask for a free trial – **AGC members get a discount!** For a list of 200 bidding projects posted on February 3, use this link: <http://www.agcmn.org/files/This%20Week's%20Bidding%20Projects.pdf> or go to www.agcmn.org.



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