

for the long haul

Kern Transportation Foundation

We're Moving Forward

October 2006

Forum 2006 a Huge Success! Measure I and State Transportation Infrastructure Needs Featured with Record Attendance

KTF's Forum 2006 was held as advertised on October 4, and all indications are that it was one of the most successful in the lengthy history of that annual event. The forum's theme was "Efficient Transportation in Kern County," a subject of obvious and growing concern to county residents. An appreciative audience of about 100 local citizens listened attentively to an excellent



McKernan and the Media

panel presentation on the probably impacts in Kern County of Measure I—the local half-cent sales tax initiative proposed on the November ballot for traffic relief and road safety—and were then treated to an impressive review of transportation needs

across the state by keynote speaker Thomas McKernan.

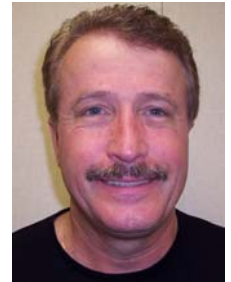
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November Ballot Offers Judgmental Voters Unparalleled Transportation Options

On Tuesday, November 7—Election Day—Kern County voters will face a decision process of unique proportions as they mark their ballots: should they support local Measure I and statewide Propositions 1A and 1B? These three initiatives clearly have important implications for the future of transportation facilities in this county and across the state, but their approval would mean new costs for taxpayers. *What to do?* KTF recommends careful consideration of the issues and the planned uses of the proposed revenue, followed by informed voting

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The President's Corner

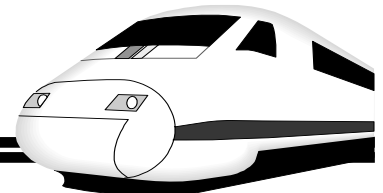


Greetings from the KTF Board once again! We continue to be energized by the substantial progress currently being made on the several initiatives discussed

in our July *Newsletter* edition—all of which will affect the quality of Kern County's transportation infrastructure. In this *Newsletter* we will comment on those initiatives as they have evolved over the past three months, with particular emphasis on those that will appear on the November ballot. The latter include Measure I, the proposed local half-cent sales tax measure, and Propositions 1A and 1B, the heart of the state's GoCalifornia action plan. Part of our excitement comes from the outstanding success of Forum 2006, where those initiatives were discussed in detail.

The plain fact is that California has far outgrown its investment in transportation infrastructure, and Kern County seems a microcosm of that circumstance. The state's population has exploded from about 16 million in the 1960s to around 36 million today, and it is projected to reach something like 42 million by 2020. Meanwhile, our transportation systems have become a poster child for underinvestment. For example, road capacity has increased only two percent since 1992, while our population just over that period alone has grown by 16 percent and vehicle-miles driven per year by 25 percent. Local drivers using state routes 14, 58, 178 or 119 during commute times will probably agree that Kern County is definitely being affected by funding shortfalls! KTF is actively seeking to inform the public on options to address such concerns.

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Safe Roads—Continued from Page 1



Failed Pavement
in Kern County

based on the potential social and economic impacts of the initiatives. The stakes are large, and a casual trip to the polls will not serve.

Local voters have certainly been provided access to a plethora of information about the

transportation initiatives. Both the April and July editions of this *Newsletter* included extensive discussion of the needs analysis and planning leading to their introduction to the November ballot (reference: www.ktfonline.org). More recently, Forum 2006 offered similar discussion in a major public meeting (see review elsewhere in this edition). The California Department of Transportation (www.dot.ca.gov) and Kern COG (www.kerncog.org) websites both provide access to large electronic databases on the subject. The voter information pamphlet issued by the state contains complete versions of the language contained in Propositions 1A and 1B, as does the Kern County pamphlet for Measure I—along with any pro and con statements filed regarding those initiatives. Many other sources could also be cited—including statements by Governor Schwarzenegger, who has been stumping the state on behalf of his infrastructure program, in which Propositions 1A and 1B are critical elements.

Focusing on local Measure I, the primary advocacy group is Kern Taxpayers for Safety and Tax Relief—Yes on Measure I, a citizens' organization that has been extremely energetic in mounting a county-wide program of presentations and mailings to inform voters of the benefits to be derived from passage of the proposed half-cent sales tax. Roger McIntosh's appearance at Forum 2006 was largely on behalf of the that group, and his message is reported in the accompanying article on the forum—the address of the advocacy website is www.KernMeasureI.com. Measure I has received broad local endorsement, including all city governments in Kern County. No organized opposition to Measure I has surfaced to date.

Even though KTF is recommending careful study, the average voter might easily be overwhelmed in attempting to synthesize a balloting position on the three transportation initiatives from the sources suggested above. Perhaps it may be useful to consider what appear to be basic facts underlying the three proposals:

- The need for major improvements in transportation infrastructures in Kern County and statewide is obvi-

ous and growing, and can only become more critical unless given early attention;

- The backlog of required renovation and construction has been carefully assessed by qualified engineers and planners and amounts to many billions of dollars, largely unfunded at the present time;
- The proposed ballot initiatives represent the key to an essentially integrated program maximizing the use of federal, state and local dollars to address the infrastructure needs on a broad scale;
- The overall level of bond funding to be created by the statewide infrastructure propositions has been studied carefully, and managed as intended, it would not exceed the indebtedness ceiling generally considered prudent;
- Measure I would support a defined program of local improvements benefiting all sections of Kern County, and it would establish Kern as a self-help county and provide matching funds to assure the capture of available federal and state grants; and
- Measure I incorporates provisions that assure all proceeds from the sales tax would stay in Kern County and be expended to address local needs according to local planning strategies.

At an even more basic level, however, Kern County voters may simply wish to cast their ballots with two images in mind: the “Failed Pavement” photo above and the funding dichotomy shown in Figure 3 (McKernan: Forum 2006). “What to do” may be obvious.

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High Speed Rail Picking up Steam

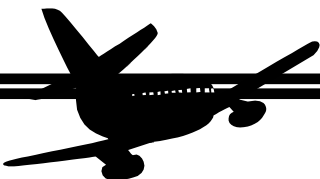
The California High Speed Rail Authority has accelerated its program development pace with gratifying speed since the passage of the state's FY 2006/07 budget provided a last-minute windfall of necessary funding. After meeting only twice in the first six months of 2006, the HSRA Board has now met four times in three months, most recently on October 25. At those meetings, the agendas have been replete with action items required to initiate program implementation.

Examples of real progress at the Board's September 27 meeting in

(Cont. on Page 3)



Kern County's Fran Florez Chairs
August 9, 2006 HSRA Board Meeting



President's Corner—Continued from Page 1

Measure I on the November ballot, the *Kern County Congestion Relief, Traffic Safety, and Road Improvement Program*, gives Kern's voters an opportunity to take positive action on their own behalf by levying a half-cent sales tax on themselves to fund key transportation projects and programs throughout the county—Kern County would thus join the growing number of California's counties that have elected "self-help" status as an alternative to traffic congestion and marginal roads.

Also included throughout this Newsletter edition are thoughts on state Propositions 1A and 1B, the transportation elements of Governor Schwarzenegger's proposed long-term investment program for updating California's transportation, public safety and public service infrastructures, as well as a brief report on developments in the state's high speed rail initiative. This edition obviously covers a wide range of transportation topics, but all are extremely meaningful to the social and economic future of Kern County's citizens—it is crucial that you study the issues raised and take an active part in their resolution.

Cordially,

Gary Blackburn

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High Speed Rail—Continued from Page 2

cluded: authorization to the HSRA Executive Director for entering into a MOU with the Orange County Transportation Authority in connection with the rail corridors between Los Angeles and Anaheim and Anaheim and Ontario; and approval of the selection of Infrastructure Management Group, Inc./Lehman Brothers for preparation of a detailed financing plan.

In other key September actions, the Authority released RFQs for preliminary design and project-specific environmental analysis pertaining to the following corridors: Fresno-Palmdale, Palmdale-Los Angeles, and Los Angeles-Orange County. Further, release of the Sacramento-Fresno and Los Angeles-San Diego RFQs is expected in early November.

At the October 25 meeting, HSRA staff continued their accelerated pace by presenting a recommendation for a consulting firm to serve as Program Manager. The agenda also included an overview of proposals received for the Visual Simulation system which is a part of the project, as well as the staff's recommendation for the contract recipient.

For more information about the Authority, visit www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov.

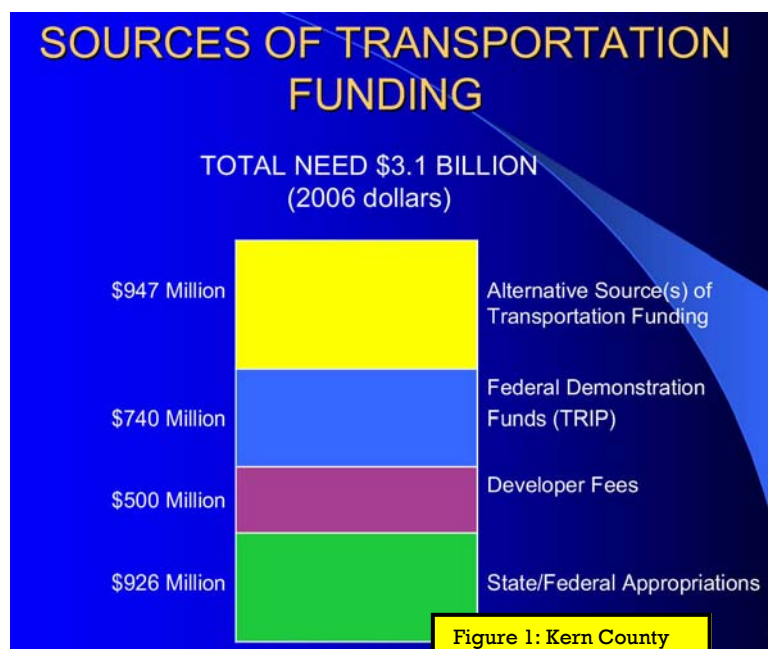
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Forum 2006—Continued from Page 1

Held at Bakersfield's DoubleTree Hotel, the forum was opened by host Ken Secor as he introducing in turn Kern County Supervisor Barbara Patrick, current Board chairperson, and Harvey Hall, Mayor of Bakersfield. Supervisor Patrick welcomed the attendees present and then briefly reviewed transportation infrastructure needs across the county, stressing the importance of Measure I. Mayor Hall also expressed his welcome, similarly speaking about potential Measure I impacts from the City's perspective.

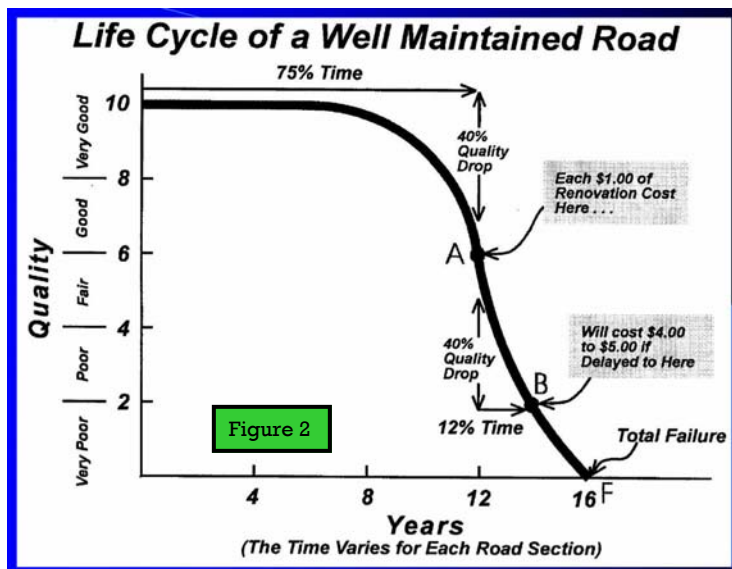
The first major presentation on the Forum 2006 agenda was the panel moderated by Lois Chaney, a long-time KTF supporter. Lois' speakers were: David Price, Kern County Resource Management Agency Director; Roger McIntosh, a principal in Bakersfield-based McIntosh and Associates, a consulting and civil engineering firm; and D.J. Smith, founder and President of Smith, Watts and Company, an advocacy and consulting organization having a specialty in transportation issues. Their general topic was "Transportation Needs," with the principal focus of their remarks on Kern County—although linkages to statewide requirements for improved transportation infrastructure were noted during the presentation.

David Price presented a series of MS PowerPoint slides summarizing the projected population growth in the county (expected to nearly double over the next 20 years) and relating that growth to a pressing need for roadway improvement and expansion. His slides displayed data indicating that, without an action plan involving a significant infusion of additional funding, local residents may expect to see congestion increase by as much as 140% and accident rates by 125% county-wide.



Price's presentation included financial data on projected costs and sources of funding which suggested a requirement for some \$3.1 billion in new monies for transportation expenditures in the county over the 20-year study period. He noted that the county's annual General Fund expenditures for roadway work have averaged almost \$3.6 million since 1991, even in the face of other competing demands for local public services—however, that level of spending has proven insufficient and would be even less sufficient in meeting increased future needs. Figure 1, copied from one of his slides, illustrates potential sources for the required added increment of funding. Although Price, as a public servant, could not engage in advocacy, it seemed obvious that he hoped the "Alternative Sources" element of Figure 1 could be supplied by voter approval of Measure I.

Figure 2 is another interesting illustration copied from Price's presentation; it graphically depicts the cost savings to be realized from a well-managed and timely roadway maintenance program. With the cost of construction materials and labor escalating very rapidly (they have *doubled* in just the past three years), prudent management obviously demands attention to such considerations—but the funding to mount the program must be available on a dependable basis.



Roger McIntosh also employed PowerPoint slides to help convey his message. As a private citizen and professional engineer and planner, he made it very clear that he advocated the approval of Measure I to address present and future transportation infrastructure needs Kern County. Inasmuch as some of the foundation data for his presentation were drawn from the same sources as those employed by Director Price, there was a bit of understandable overlap in growth and impact statistics and estimated costs—however, such overlap seemed only to emphasize important points and to

present them from more than one perspective. McIntosh devoted most of his remarks to summarizing the beneficial nature of Measure I as a response to the county's transportation issues.

In addition to emphasizing again the forecasts for growth in population and for potential related increases in traffic congestion, accidents, air pollution and other negative impacts, McIntosh also outlined the planned distribution of income from the sales tax for projects county-wide. (Since that subject has been covered in previous editions of this *Newsletter* and will be referenced again elsewhere in this edition, there is no need to repeat such coverage here.) He emphasized certain general points that definitely should be noted:

- The proposed tax will deliver traffic reduction and road safety improvements throughout Kern County according to an approved plan;
- Funds raised in the county will stay in the county, and each community will receive a formula-driven share to employ locally to meet its transportation infrastructure needs;
- The measure contains meaningful provisions for the improvement of local air quality;
- Funds will be available for matching state and federal appropriations requiring local participation;
- Use of Measure I funding will be audited annually by a taxpayer oversight committee to assure voter mandates are met; and
- Measure I is supported by numerous groups and organizations ranging from the Automobile Club of Southern California and the Kern County Taxpayers Association to public safety personnel and organized labor councils.

D.J. Smith faced the traditional situation of being the last speaker in a panel of speakers all addressing the same general subject. Even though an effort had been made to parcel out the topic's coverage, his predecessors had unavoidably strayed into his territory. However, Smith avoided the use of PowerPoint slides as an obvious source of information overlap and addressed the subject of Measure I as a response to local transportation needs from a different perspective: the political realities of achieving voter support for its passage.

Smith briefly reviewed the statewide political climate surrounding the attainment of status as a "self-help" county through local funding strategies like Measure I, noting that such status was invaluable in providing leverage for attracting state and federal support. Using the results of recent balloting for similar measures in other counties as background, he emphasized that achieving success in Kern County would very likely be possible, but would require a major effort by its proponents. Current polling suggests that local voter preferences are hovering very close to the necessary

two-thirds support, with no organized opposition yet apparent; but Smith warned that numerous negative factors could come into play before the election. Measure I proponents must continue to pursue the strong and integrated strategy they have mapped out. The measure's language is excellent, the plan for using the proposed funding is comprehensive and provides a "win/win" environment for communities across the county, and the list of supporters is outstanding—that message much reach all voters. Smith commented that individual efforts in communicating information and creating a positive image for Measure I would be essential to the process.

After an informal luncheon immediately following the panel presentation, keynote speaker Thomas McKernan was introduced. Mr. McKernan has been President and Chief Executive Officer of the Automobile Club of Southern California since 1991, and under his leadership, Auto Club membership has more than tripled and has expanded into other states. That leadership skill has been recognized by his appointment to many public and private boards and commissions across California. His views on transportation issues in California and the U.S. are widely respected, and often sought by other state and national authorities.

Mr. McKernan's general topic was the need for increased transportation funding in California, and his remarks on that subject were offered in a telling manner and with great conviction. His presentation included

PowerPoint slides, some unavoidably drawn from the same data sources employed earlier by David Price and Roger McIntosh; however, like D.J. Smith, McKernan was adroit in finding fresh perspectives and citing new points of interest while crossing over familiar territory.

Figure 3 was copied from one of Mr. McKernan's slides; it graphically displays California data on population, vehicular miles traveled and per capita highway expenditures versus time for the period 1955-2000. The speaker pointed out a highly significant fact illustrated in the graph: *until the late 1960s, the growth of per capita expenditures on highways in the state roughly paralleled (to the selected scale) population and travel growth; thereafter, such expenditures diminished dramatically until the mid-1980s and still have not returned to the 1960s growth rate.* The source of the existing enormous backlog of transportation infrastructure needs in California seems obvious. McKernan suggested five key policy areas where the state should be working to recoup its situation:

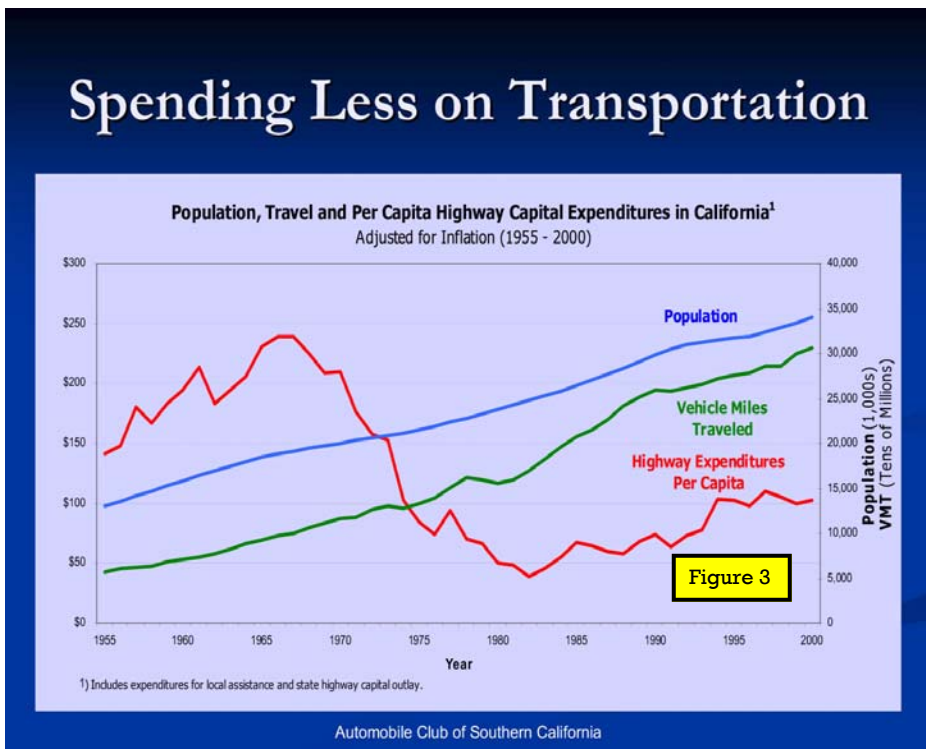
1. Maintain, improve, and expand the road system;
2. Improve the automobile and how we use it;
3. Provide attractive options to the automobile;
4. Improve California's transportation planning and decision-making processes; and
5. Establish and maintain adequate and reliable funding for transportation.

The speaker briefly explored each of these policy areas. His thoughts about improved planning and decision-making processes were particularly interesting, including attention to several key elements relating to better use of current resources:

- Regular "needs" assessments;
- Performance measurements and benchmarks;
- Cost reduction efforts;
- Environmental streamlining;
- Coordination across jurisdictions; and
- Public education and involvement.

McKernan indicated, however, that better utilization of existing resources could not be expected to overcome the state's huge backlog of transportation infrastructure needs—more funding must be found. Possible sources are:

- Maintenance of the motor vehicle fuel tax;
- Allocation of more federal funds to California;
- Wider use of bonds;
- Transfer of general funds; and



- Evaluation of:
 - ✓ Fuel tax levels
 - ✓ Toll opportunities
 - ✓ Truck taxes based on weight and distance.

When discussing the above sources, McKernan was particularly emphatic in noting that California did not seem to reclaim its fair share of the federal gas tax. This state, which carries a large percentage of the travel, commerce and freight for the whole nation, received only \$78 per person through the most recent federal transportation spending bill—as contrasted to \$544 per person in Vermont and \$1,600 for each Alaskan.

Mr. McKernan capped his remarks by stating that, for all the reasons he had explored in his presentation, AAA was strongly supportive of transportation funding initiatives like state ballot Propositions 1A and 1B and Kern County's Measure I. (He also reviewed the content and probable impacts of each of those three initiatives, but, as suggested earlier, that material appears elsewhere in this *Newsletter* and need not be repeated here.) McKernan concluded with the same caveat and challenge that several other presenters had expressed during the day's program: passage of Propositions 1A and 1B and Measure I should not be taken for granted by their supporters; maximum efforts to get out the vote will

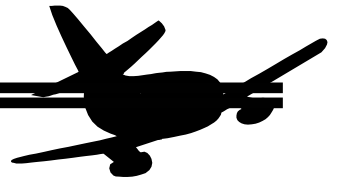
be required, and individual efforts can be very productive in assuring success. He assured those present that the Auto Club would provide all possible help.

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