

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Highways Connect People During Summer Vacations

Skokie, Ill., June 9, 2006—Families will crisscross America on nearly 47,000 miles of interstate highways this summer—despite escalating gas prices and congested roadways.

Why? “Connections,” says Gerald F. Voigt, P.E., President & CEO of the American Concrete Pavement Association. “Americans are determined to take family vacations because these road trips create a bond so strong that we reminisce long after the journeys are over.”

Heading to the Highways

This summer, as American citizens head to the highways, the top three activities will be visiting friends and relatives (55 percent); going to a beach or lake (38 percent); and visiting small towns or rural areas (27 percent), according to travel industry experts. Forty percent of travelers plan to take their children or grandchildren on their longest trip this summer.

Few motorists realize that the Interstate highway system was envisioned back in 1919 by Lt. Col. Dwight D. Eisenhower (later, the 34th U.S. President) as a means to connect the country via a network of interconnected highways that improved both efficiency and safety of travel. This year, the 50th anniversary of the system, there’s both good and bad news about the Interstate.

The good news is that Americans are expected to take 325.6 million “leisure person” trips during June, July, and August 2006. “A leisure person” is one person traveling 50-plus miles, one way, away from home, according to the Travel Industry Association of America.

(more)

The bad news is that Interstate highways are today more congested and covered with orange cones and flashing construction barriers than ever before. This is not what President Eisenhower had in mind, Voigt says.

Construction Lags Population Growth

Making matters worse, construction of new highway capacity has not kept pace with a dramatic increase in population and burgeoning number of vehicles. Between 1980 and 1999, the total length of highways, measured by miles, increased by only 1.5 percent, while total number of miles of vehicle travel increased by 76 percent, reports the Texas Transportation Institute.

One explanation for the increase in passenger vehicles and trucks on today's highways is population growth during the past 50 years. In fact, the nation's population has grown from 168 million people in 1956 to today's U.S. Census figures of approximately 299 million people.

"Americans should have peace of mind, knowing that the roads they travel are safe and nearly free of disruptive perpetual maintenance," Voigt says. "When people ask if they have a choice, the answer is a resounding yes. Taxpayers do have a choice, and they deserve the best because our tax dollars are used for highway upgrades and construction.

"This is why they deserve concrete pavements, which can ease congestion on today's highways and roadways because they provide a long-lasting, maintenance-free system," Voigt says, adding, "Now more than ever before, many transportation departments are taking a new look at concrete pavements. Concrete pavements get people where they need to go, because they don't require the frequent maintenance, repair, and replacement that we see with petroleum-based asphalt pavements.

"Also, with skyrocketing oil prices, which increase the price of asphalt too, concrete pavements are an even better value to taxpayers, who have every right to long-lasting, safe, and efficient highways," he says.

###

Media contact:

Bill Davenport 847-966-2272
American Concrete Pavement Association
5420 Old Orchard Road
Suite A-100
Skokie, IL 60077
E-mail: bdavenport@pavement.com