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North Carolina's Bridge Needs Continue to Outpace Funding
Anniversary of Minnesota bridge collapse reminder of need to invest

Raleigh, N.C. – One year after the I-35 bridge over the Mississippi River in Minnesota collapsed, states across the nation continue to scramble to address bridge safety and sufficiency. North Carolina, according to transportation advocacy group *NC Go!*, is no different and faces a growing number of bridges needing replacement or repair. Unfortunately funding for such projects lags far behind needs and must be increased.

“North Carolina is falling further and further behind,” said Berry Jenkins, *NC Go!* co-chair. “Our bridges are aging out of usefulness and safety faster than we can pay to repair or replace them.”

North Carolina has the second largest number of state maintained bridges – 18,540 or 377 miles. Over the next 20 years, 8,300 bridges will “come of age” and require replacement. Currently, North Carolina is only replacing about 100 bridges annually and to keep pace, the state would need to replace more than 400 bridges per year. While the I-35 bridge failure was the result of design flaws, overall bridge safety must be considered.

“Bridges are critical links in our transportation system,” said Jenkins. “We cannot afford to minimize their value. The safe movement of people, goods and services rely on our more than 18,000 bridges, yet more than 5,000 are rated as structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. Our quality of life and economy depend on reliable and safe bridges.”

NC Go! is urging legislators to consider a major funding initiative to address bridges, highways, transit and the entire transportation system when they convene for the 2009 session. Authorizing a large-scale transportation bond should be a priority for the General Assembly next year.

“If we ever want to get ahead of inflation and address the transportation needs of our fast-growing state, the time has come for a substantial bond package,” said Jenkins. “We have to commend the legislature for its work this session, but there is more to be done.

“An injection of transportation funding would create jobs, strengthen the economy and prepare North Carolina for its increase in population,” said Jenkins. “Our critical bridge needs should serve as a wake-up call to the citizens of the state. Every driver and business in this state should urge their legislators to adequately fund the transportation needs of North Carolina.”

About *NC Go!*

NC Go! is the state's only broad-based coalition advocating for North Carolina's transportation system. Our coalition consists of nearly 100 businesses, chambers of commerce, associations and transit agencies representing 25,000 businesses and member organizations, with more than 6 million employees, transit riders, citizens and drivers in North Carolina. *NC Go!* has led the call to adequately invest in highways, bridges, public transportation, rails, ports, airports and ferries.