The Haslam Administration is presenting a six-week series, “Tennessee Infrastructure,” to the House and Senate Transportation committees to highlight projects and answer questions about the need for increased funding. During the first three presentations, the themes of which are detailed below, Commissioner John Schroer and Chief Engineer Paul Degges from TDOT were joined by other state officials to provide information to committee members.

Three themes of why Tennessee needs good roads emerged:

- **SAFETY**
- **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**
- **PRIORITIZATION**

A variety of roadway challenges exist, and these challenges vary by county. For some, access to industrial roads is a top priority, while others list traffic congestion or severe crashes. A variety of factors influence project priorities; but regardless, a long-term funding solution is needed if these projects are to become a reality.
Commissioner Schroer noted that legislators were interested in hearing how projects are prioritized. He shared that TDOT is creating a long-term vision for transportation, the “25-Year Long-Range Transportation Plan,” to provide a foundation for prioritizing transportation investments across the state. This plan will be the framework to address current and future projects and funding.

THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE PLAN ARE:

- **ROADWAY SAFETY**
- **TRAFFIC OPERATIONS**
- **TDOT REGIONS, LEGISLATIVE, MPO AND RPO PRIORITIES**
- **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**
- **ROADWAY CLASSIFICATIONS/MULTIMODAL**
- **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**
- **FUNDING**

TDOT is a data-driven agency, and Paul Degges, TDOT Chief Engineer, noted that the department uses an algorithmic program to determine relative weighting criteria, which gives them the ability to analyze projects and prioritize them. **Roadway safety and traffic operations represent about 52 percent in the algorithm.** TDOT pulls from a variety of technical information collected from various sources, such as crash data from the Department of Safety and Homeland Security. TDOT also looks at subjective factors, such as project schedules, funding and balance across the state.
TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE IS KEY TO TENNESSEE’S ECONOMY

TDOT’S INVESTMENT IN INFRASTRUCTURE HAS GENERATED A $1.3 BILLION RETURN ON INVESTMENT IN OUR STATE. In the past year, TDOT has invested $33 million in 18 projects, resulting in 6,000 new jobs and an ROI of more than a billion dollars.

WHEN RURAL ROADS ARE MAINTAINED, THOSE RESIDENTS EXPERIENCE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES. Twenty-one counties in Tennessee rank in the bottom 10 percent in the United States in poverty, unemployment and household income. The Department of Economic and Community Development has created a task force to build industrial parks to bring businesses to those areas, and good roads are an essential piece of that growth.

TENNESSEE’S TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE MUST KEEP UP WITH OUR INCREASING POPULATION. The cost of transportation has roughly tripled in the last 20 years. As new job opportunities continue to come into the state, Tennessee’s population is growing rapidly. The state’s population is set to increase by more than 2 million people by 2040.

EXAMPLE OF ROI BY THE NUMBERS:

HANKOOK TIRE IN CLARKSVILLE

RESULT: $800 million investment
1,800 jobs

TDOT INVESTMENT: $18.6 million

ACADEMY SPORTS IN COOKEVILLE

RESULT: $100 million investment
700 jobs

TDOT INVESTMENT: $14.5 million

UNDER ARMOUR IN MT. JULIET

RESULT: $102 million investment
1,500 jobs

TDOT INVESTMENT: $908,000

90% of TDOT’s dollars go back to communities in the form of road projects, grants and maintenance, while only 2% goes to administrative costs.

90%

2%
SAFETY:
The Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security and TDOT are partners in an effort to make our highways safer.

Reducing traffic congestion and improving road conditions are critical to improving roadway safety. Road conditions and traffic congestion can be, in many cases, factors in serious crashes and traffic fatalities.

In 2014, the Tennessee Highway Patrol investigated 2,633 crashes for which road conditions or traffic congestion was a factor.

In 2015, troopers cited traffic or road conditions as a factor in 2,853 crashes.

Improving safety doesn’t just save lives, it has an economic impact – ranging from insurance rates to TennCare costs.

Visit the Transportation Coalition’s website at www.TransportationCoalitionTN.org/recent-news to stay up to date on Tennessee’s latest transportation and infrastructure news.