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Spring Is FAST (Act) Approaching

CONSTRUCTION, TRANSPORTATION & LOGISTICS

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As spring approaches, we all tend to think of longer days, warmer weather and ... potholes?? Admittedly, this past winter has been tame compared to the last few we've seen in Pittsburgh; however, the freeze-thaw pattern we see each winter has exposed new potholes that continue to deteriorate an aging infrastructure system.

In 2013, the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) released its Report Card for America's Infrastructure. Based on the ASCE report, America's infrastructure GPA was a D+, and the estimated investment needed by 2020 was \$3.6 trillion. The most significant infrastructure need was related to surface transportation with a need of \$1.72 trillion. Current funding in 2014 was at an estimated \$877 billion, which leaves a funding gap of over \$840 billion!

Locally, Pennsylvania received an overall grade of C- from ASCE in 2014, with bridges and roads receiving two of the lowest marks at D+ and D-, respectively. Pennsylvania has the highest percentage of structurally deficient bridges in the nation at 23%.

In December 2015, the President Obama signed into law the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act, or FAST Act. The FAST Act is the first federal law in over ten years to provide long-term funding for surface transportation. The legislation provides \$305 billion over five years for states and local governments to plan and undertake long-term, complex problems for surface transportation projects, including roads and bridges, public transportation, highway and motor vehicle safety, truck and bus safety, hazardous materials and railroads.

Infrastructure is the backbone of America, and the FAST Act provides much-needed funding certainty to state and local governments to plan long-term surface transportation improvements, including those pothole fixes. The U.S. Department of Transportation is working to implement the FAST Act's new programs to provide the 2016 funding to state agencies in preparation for the upcoming construction season.

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