



**TEXAS SECTION
AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CIVIL ENGINEERS
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The State of Texas's Infrastructure
Civil Engineers Assign Texas Infrastructure a C-

Austin, Texas – Unfortunately traffic congestion, stressed drinking water systems, overloaded wastewater treatment plants, and flooding events are all too common experiences. The Texas Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) today released its *2008 Texas Infrastructure Report Card Update*, which assigned the state's infrastructure a cumulative grade of C- in 13 infrastructure areas – roads and highways, bridges, transit, aviation, schools, drinking water, wastewater, dams, solid waste, hazardous waste, navigable waterways, flood control and energy.

The purpose of the 2008 report card update is to help continue to raise public awareness of the importance of a dependable and well-maintained infrastructure. This infrastructure is essential for our public health, quality of life and serves as a foundation for economic growth in the state. These three infrastructure areas were chosen for re-evaluation to help provide background and support for the upcoming legislative session and due to the growing demand on our transportation infrastructure, the recent catastrophic bridge failures with the concerns these have raised and the significant threat to the general public should a high hazard dam fail. Previous grades of the condition of Texas's transit, aviation, schools, drinking water systems, wastewater, solid waste, hazardous waste, navigable waterways, flood control and energy were used with the three updated grades to calculate the cumulative grade of C-.

“The health, safety and welfare of our residents is tied directly to the condition and quality of our state’s infrastructure” says Ricky J. Bourque, P.E., president of the Texas Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers. This dismal grade indicates the below average condition of many infrastructure systems in Texas. *“Not only is our infrastructure currently being under funded based on current needs, but at present levels of investment we will continue to fall further and further behind unless we take action to close the funding gap. If Texas wants to grow economically and maintain our quality of life, investment into infrastructure needs to be a higher priority.”*

The 2008 update focused on three areas from the 2004 report card – Texas’s roads and highways, bridges and dams in terms of condition and performance, capacity versus need, and funding versus need.

Road and Highways – D (reduced from C- in 2004)

The Texas Transportation Commission can fund less than 40% of projects deemed worthy and cost-effective, and this situation is often a direct result of inequities in the re-distribution of Federal gasoline taxes to states where drivers log higher numbers of vehicle miles. The construction cost index increased by 66% over the past five years. The 2009 Texas Legislature should work on addressing the current lack of funding to avoid further degradation of roads and highways in Texas.

Bridges – B- (increased from C- in 2004)

Texas has 49,829 bridges. Of these, 11,336 are considered non-sufficient: i.e. structurally deficient, functionally obsolete, or sub-standard. The number of non-sufficient bridges is decreasing by an average of 218 bridges per year. For the 5-year period between 2001 and 2006, TxDOT has made significant progress in the improvement of bridges and has made steady progress towards reaching its goal of having 80% of our bridges sufficient by September 2011. However, at current inventory levels, the state still needs to improve 274 bridges per year to reach its goal. Recent large reductions in maintenance and replacement/rehabilitation expenditures could easily disrupt progress and extended periods of budget cuts could reverse progress as many bridges continue to

reach their 50-year design life. TxDOT's goal of 80% sufficient bridges still leaves approximately 10,000 non-sufficient bridges.

Dams – D- (remains same as 2004)

Texas currently lists 7,478 non-federal dams including 888 high hazard (probable loss of life) and 799 significant hazard dams (potential loss of life). Most high hazard dams do not have regular inspections or maintenance and the estimated cost for repairs, in 2003, exceeded \$710 million. The owners must provide all funding because there are no dedicated State or Federal funds. While some dam owners have been able to fund rehabilitation projects, the number of structures improved each year represents only a very small percentage of the dams in Texas. In 2007, the Texas Dam Safety program only received \$590,601 that was used primarily for inspections. In 2008 the program received \$666,549. Although the Dam Safety Program has increased the number of annual inspections and new rules will be enacted in 2008, the program still lacks the funding needed to ensure the safe construction, maintenance, repair, or removal of dams in the State of Texas.

(For more details for the remaining 10 infrastructure areas, visit www.texasce.org/docs/ReportCard.cfm)

Although the state has made significant investments many areas, most infrastructure areas are still in need of substantial investments for repairs, rehabilitation and expansion in order to provide quality service to the state's growing population. Based on the 2004 report card and the 2008 update, the greatest needs remain in schools, drinking water, dams(no change), navigable waterways, flood control and now road and highway infrastructure, which were assigned a poor grade of "D or below."

The *2008 Texas Infrastructure Report Card Update* follows the national *2005 Report Card for America's Infrastructure*, which assigned our nation's infrastructure a cumulative grade of "D" for 15 infrastructure areas - aviation, bridges, dams, drinking water, energy, hazardous waste, navigable

waterways, public parks and recreation, rail, roads, schools, security, solid waste, transit and wastewater. The national assessment shows that our nation's roads, bridges, drinking water systems, schools and other public works continue to deteriorate and Texas is no exception, suffering from aging infrastructure and the need for federal, state and local funds to bring the state's infrastructure to an adequate condition. ASCE stands ready to be a resource for Texas' infrastructure needs. Investment in our state's infrastructure at this critical time will provide short term economic benefits and help ensure a long term quality of life for all the residents of Texas.

Founded in 1852, the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) represents more than 146,000 civil engineers worldwide and more than 9,000 civil engineers in Texas. ASCE is America's oldest national engineering society. For more information about the 2008 Texas Infrastructure Report Card Update, visit <http://www.texasce.org/docs/ReportCard.cfm>.

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