

President Obama on Roadway Safety and Saving Lives

March 3, 2009

“Of the 3.5 million jobs that will be created and saved over the next two years as a result of this recovery plan, 400,000 will be jobs rebuilding our crumbling roads, bridges, and schools, repairing our faulty levees and dams, connecting nearly every American to broadband, and upgrading the buses and trains that commuters take every day. Many of these projects will be coordinated by Secretary LaHood and all of you at the Department of Transportation. And I want you to know that the American public is grateful to public servants like you -- men and women whose work isn't always recognized, but whose jobs are critical to our nation's safety, security, and prosperity. You have never been more important than you are right now, and for that we are all grateful.

Altogether, this investment in highways will create or save 150,000 jobs by the end of next year, most of them in the private sector. And just to give you a sense of perspective, that's more jobs being created or saved in one year than GM, Ford, and Chrysler have lost in manufacturing over the past three years -- combined. The job -- the jobs that we're creating are good jobs that pay more than average; jobs grinding asphalt and paving roads, filling potholes, making street signs, repairing stop lights, replacing guard rails.

But what makes this investment so important is not simply that we will jumpstart job creation, or reduce the congestion that costs us nearly \$80 billion a year, or rebuild the aging roads that cost drivers billions more a year in upkeep. What makes it so important is that by investing in roads that have earned a grade of D- by America's leading civil engineers -- roads that should have been rebuilt long ago -- we can save some 14,000 men and women who lose their lives each year due to bad roads and driving conditions. Like a broken levee or a bridge with a shaky foundation, poor roads are a public hazard -- and we have a responsibility to fix them.”

From Remarks by President Barack Obama, March 3, 2009