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## Leading the News

## Law: Failure To Fix Infrastructure Could Lead To Job Losses, Higher Prices.

[Bloomberg News](#) (9/10, Katz) reports that Treasury Secretary Lew warned that "failing to improve the nation's infrastructure could lead to job losses and higher prices." Lew said, "The consequences of failing to provide and maintain our infrastructure will be severe." Lew's comments came as the Treasury and DOT were "holding an infrastructure investment conference," which, according to a White House statement, included "investors intending to spend more than \$50 billion in U.S. infrastructure." Transportation Secretary Anthony Fox said that the US has "a lot of distance to make up" in infrastructure investment. The share of gross domestic product spent on infrastructure "versus countries like China is much smaller by, in some cases, about half." When asked about Russian threats to cut off access to that country's air space, Fox said the FAA's "focus is on the safety of the American traveling public, and we have to manage international situations all the time." [Bloomberg News](#) (9/9) also has a video report.

[Reuters](#) (9/10) also points out that Fox highlighted a \$950 million loan DOT approved last week for the I-4 Ultimate project. The [Engineering News Record](#) (9/9) also reports.

**Administration's Infrastructure Plan Could Result In More Tolls.** [USA Today](#) (9/10, Korte) reports that the Administration is seeking "more creative ways to build and fix the nation's roads and bridges," which "could mean more tolls" for many drivers. Lew said his Department "is launching a study that will try to identify the planned transportation and water projects that will provide the biggest economic boost," adding that "budget shortfalls at all levels of government" make it all the more important to come up with fresh, innovative ways to unlock capital and get more projects underway." This could mean that "future new lanes on congested interstates could be financed by tolls," giving drivers "a choice between the slower free lanes and the faster toll lanes." USA Today points out that Fox announced three projects "that he held out as examples of what the Obama administration was trying to encourage." Fox said, "We're putting two feet into this effort already."

**St. Paul Mayor Discusses Roads With Foxx.** The [Minneapolis Star Tribune](#) (9/10, Duchschere) reports that St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman, who is serving as president of the National League of Cities, planned to meet Tuesday with Transportation Secretary Anthony Fox as part of an "Infrastructure Investment Summit" at the Treasury Department. The Star Tribune says that among the topics to be discussed were "how to jumpstart movement on President Obama's surface transportation plan, which would dedicate billions to filling the funding gap in the Highway Trust Fund and addressing deteriorating roads and infrastructure across the nation." The Star Tribune also notes that "Coleman also plans to tell Fox about the coalition of Minnesota mayors being formed to lobby the state for additional funding for local streets."

Also reporting similarly are the [St. Paul \(MN\) Pioneer Press](#) (9/10, Melo) and the [MinnPost](#) (9/10).

## Public Safety

## Bridges In Thurston County, Washington Undergoing Inspections For Weight Limits.

The [Olympian \(WA\)](#) (9/10, Pemberton) reports local governments are required by the FHWA to "evaluate their bridges for new load ratings by Dec. 2017, to ensure that" spans are able to "handle modern vehicles," which are designed to carry heavier loads. According to the article, civil engineer Matt Unzelman said Thurston County Public Works is approximately "a third of the way through checking those weight limits on the 119 roadway bridges in its inventory." However, the report adds that the Board of County Commissioners unanimously voted to hire an outside firm to conduct the inspections on 10 structures.

## Law and Policy

## FHWA, FTA Announce Rulemaking

[The Hill](#) (9/10, Devaney) reports on Wednesday's edition of the Federal Register. The Hill notes that FHWA and FTA "said Tuesday they are accepting comments for the next 60 days on their proposal to implement new transportation planning regulations developed by state and local agencies."

## Research and Funding

## Automobile Industry Responding To Vehicle-Hacking Threat.

The [Detroit Free Press](#) (9/10, Snavelly) reports the automobile industry is developing ways to defend automobiles and trucks from cyberattacks. The article says new cars are "are chock-full of computer chips, sensors and nanotechnology that can be controlled by up to 100,000 lines of software code." Andrew Brown, chief technologist and vice president of Delphi Automotive, is cited saying that breaking into automobile infotainment systems remotely would be difficult, but "for a hacker who is familiar with the software it's a different story." Brown is quoted saying, "It is very important that we have an industry-wide approach to addressing cybersecurity issues...it needs to be consistent across the industry as opposed to having separate sets of protocols."

## DOE Issues Seven \$1.2 Million Grants To Build Microgrid Control Systems.

The [Albany \(NY\) Times Union](#) (9/10, Rulison) reports that the US Department of Energy has awarded a \$1.2 million grant to General Electric Co. "to develop a microgrid control system at its GE Global Research Center in Niskayuna."

The [Albany \(NY\) Business Review](#) (9/9, Rogers, Subscription Publication) reports the system "will be able to run separately from the main power station during disruptions." After GE builds it, it will undergo "six months of testing at the National Renewable Energy Lab."

The [Schenectady \(NY\) Daily Gazette](#) (9/9, Bump) reports that GE "was one of seven companies" in the US to receive a \$1.2 million grant "to develop an enhanced microgrid control system."

[FierceGovernmentIT](#) (9/10) reports that microgrid control systems will be built in Alaska, California, Illinois, Minnesota, New York, Tennessee, and Washington. Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz issued a statement Monday saying, "Building in grid resiliency has gained greater urgency in recent years, as demonstrated by the economic and personal losses from electricity outages due to severe weather," adding, "Keeping the power on during extreme weather events and other electric grid disruptions is essential."

## NCI's Varmus Helping Organize Summit On Biomedical Research Funding Crisis.

In its "Shots" blog and on its "Morning Edition" program, [NPR](#) (9/10, Harris, Benincasa) reports, "Nationwide, about 16 percent of scientists with sustaining (known as 'R01') grants in 2012 lost them the following year, according to an NPR analysis," leaving some "3,500 scientists nationwide scrambling to find money to keep their labs alive." Harold Varmus, MD, director of the National Cancer Institute, "is helping to organize a major summit meeting on" the biomedical research "funding crisis, to be held later this year." Dr. Varmus stated, "We have a system that has worked well in the past, that has made the US the leader in biomedical research worldwide." He added, "And while I don't think we've lost that yet, we do see a rising tide in lots of places."

## U.S. Science Suffering From Booms And Busts In Funding.

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## University Of Arkansas' MarTREC Receives \$1.4 Million DOT Grant.

[Arkansas Business](#) (9/9, Hogan) reports the University of Arkansas' Maritime Transportation Research and Education Center (MarTREC) was awarded a \$1.4 million grant from the DOT. Heather Nachtmann, professor of industrial engineering and the center's director said in a press release, that the center is "grateful for the support" it has received to help the US "achieve its strategic goal of economic competitiveness through efficient, resilient and sustainable transportation systems on" the nation's "navigable waterways." According to the article, the DOT grant will help a team of researchers working on developing a "rapid and non-destructive approach to assessing the condition of levees for strength and resistance to liquefaction."

## Workforce

## Colleges, Firms Partner To Train High-Tech Workforce.

[US News & World Report](#) (9/9) profiles Tom Hubschman, a mechanical engineering student at Boston University who "is working on his senior design project in the school's 9-month-old Engineering Product Innovation Center," which boasts "hardware and software for computer-assisted design and 3-D prototyping, a machine shop, an automated robotic manufacturing line, a metals foundry and a carpentry shop." The article reports that the center is "the result of a collaboration with four big partners—General Electric Aviation, Schlumberger, Procter & Gamble and technology company PTC—plus a substantial investment by the university." The piece presents the center as an example of how colleges and businesses are partnering to train high-tech workers and shepherd them into the workforce.

## Job Openings, Hires At Highest Levels In Years.

The [AP](#) (9/10) reports that in "signs the job market is slowly healing," the number of job openings has "remained near the highest level in 13 years in July," according to the Labor Department. The department also noted that companies hired workers at "the fastest pace in nearly seven years" during the same month. The number of jobs available in July "ticked down 2,000 to 4.673 million" due to a decline in government job openings, while businesses advertised more jobs in July than in June. Total hiring "jumped 81,000 to 4.87 million, the highest level" since the recession began in 2007, meaning "companies are more likely to fill their open jobs." The numbers indicate "the job market is making progress" despite last week's report.

## Ethics

## Bridge-Decking Firm Owner Sentenced In Fraud Case.

The [Elizburgh Post-Gazette](#) (9/9, Ove) reports Matthew G. Williams, owner of a bridge-decking company who admitted to forging "professional engineers' seals on bid documents for federally-funded bridge projects" in several states, was sentenced to "seven four years of federal probation." Earlier this year, Williams pleaded guilty to wire fraud. According to the article, Federal prosecutors said Williams "either forged or photo-shopped seals indicating that engineers had certified drawings he" provided to "prime contractors working on bridges funded by" an FHWA program.

## Roads and Highways

## DOT Announces \$950M TIFIA Loan To Florida Highway Project.

[The Hill](#) (9/10, Laino) reports, that DOT "is providing a \$950 million loan to a project to expand Florida's heavily-used Interstate 4 highway way in the Orlando area, the agency announced on Tuesday." The Hill notes that DOT officials said that this was the largest loan that has ever been given under the TIFIA program to a public-private partnership. "We've been able to move this project from the financing drawing board to breaking ground in near record time because of the Department's early involvement," Transportation Secretary Anthony Fox said in a statement.

[Roll Call](#) (9/10, Curry, Subscription Publication) points out that back in July, DOT Under Secretary for Policy Peter Rogoff noted that DOT has "some (TIFIA) loans that are in trouble... We now have to deal with some loans that could go south and it obviously makes people nervous, as it would with any lender." Meanwhile, Peter Ruane, the president of the American Road and Transportation Builders Association, warned that "there are some folks in Congress that really aren't happy with TIFIA" and want to eliminate the loan program. "We're going to be playing some defense in the coming weeks, in the coming months."

Also reporting are [Transport Topics Online](#) (9/10) and the [Orlando \(FL\) Business Journal](#) (9/10, Subscription Publication).

## Foxx Labeled "Player To Watch" In Transportation.

[The Hill](#) (9/10, Laino) lists its list of transportation-related "Players to Watch" for the fall of 2014 and includes, in alphabetical order, Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Transportation Secretary Anthony Fox, Senators Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND), John Hoeven (R-ND), and Mike Lee (R-UT), and TSA Administrator John Pistole. The Hill says that Fox will have to "weigh in on a bid by Norwegian Airlines to offer flights to the United States" as well as "finalize new regulations for trains carrying crude oil that are dividing the railroad industry and consumer and environmental groups."

## Senate To Hold Hearing On NHTSA.

The [Detroit \(MI\) News](#) (9/10, Shepardson) reports that a Senate Commerce subcommittee hearing will focus on NHTSA's role in GM's faulty ignition switch scandal. The news reports that the hearing is "expected to include testimony from acting NHTSA administrator David Friedman, the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers trade group and at least one auto safety advocate." Committee Chair Senator Claire McCaskill (D-MO) said "I'm interested in the capability NHTSA has to get at problems. They've obviously missed some big ones," noting that "The part of NHTSA that is responsible for monitoring issues like (GM)—they haven't even asked for an increase in staff and cars have gotten a lot more complicated." The article notes that Transportation Secretary Anthony Fox had previously said that the "had ordered a review of NHTSA's handling of the Chevrolet Cobalt recall and other complaints."

The [Detroit \(MI\) Free Press](#) (9/10, Spangler) provides similar coverage.

## Boston Mayor Wants Safety Guards On Vehicles Owned, Contracted By The City.

The [Boston Magazine](#) (9/9, Annear) reports that safety guards were installed on city-owned vehicles in Boston as part of a pilot program that was launched last year. The article says that last year, "through a collaboration" between the Boston Mayor's Office of New Urban Mechanics and the Public Works Department, city officials said they launched the "largest municipal pilot program of truck side guards" in the US, "testing three different types of guards on 16 active vehicles driving the streets." According to the article, local officials also worked with researchers from the DOT's "Volpe Center in Kendall Square to sketch out the details for the proposed guard project." The magazine says that Boston Mayor Marty Walsh has now filed an ordinance, which would require large trucks owned by the city "purchased after July 1, or trucks contracted out by departments, to be equipped with the safety rails" to help protect cyclists.

## Accurate Mapping Crucial To Autonomous Vehicles.

[Automotive News](#) (9/10, Bond) reports that during an Intelligent Transport Systems World Congress panel in Detroit, Michigan Department of Transportation Director Kirk Steudle said accurate mapping data will be crucial to autonomous vehicles. The article says that the "development of the digital road infrastructure" will determine how these vehicles "get around." According to the article, Steudle raised questions over who is responsible for developing this infrastructure, asking, "is it the government's responsibility? Is it the car manufacturer's responsibility? Is it the technology company?"

## Honda Rolls Out Self-Driving Acura Prototype.

The [AP](#) (9/10) reports that on Tuesday, Honda "shared its vision of the hands-free highway commute," a prototype Acura RLX sedan. Honda "says the technology could start appearing on Honda cars in 2020 and beyond."

## California Hits 100,000 Electric Car Milestone.

The [Los Angeles Times](#) (9/9, Fleming) reports that California residents have now bought 100,000 plug-in vehicles. Christine Kehoe of the California Plug-In Electric Vehicle Collaborative, said, "California's plug-in electric vehicle market is ramping up, and we expect to see significant growth as customers realize how economical and convenient they are." However, a "lot of Californians" will need to purchase more EVs to hit Gov. Jerry Brown's goal of 1.5 million electric cars on the road by 2025.

## Energy

## Poll Shows Voter Skepticism About EPA, Renewable Energy Policies.

[The Hill](#) (9/10, Barron-Lopez) reports that a poll of 1,005 likely voters released by American Energy Alliance "found that 65 percent of likely voters want their state, not the federal government, to decide what energy sources power their electricity supply." Fifty-two percent of respondents also said that states should not be "penalized for failing to comply with the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) proposals to cut carbon pollution," and 60 percent said that "states should not be forced to burn to renewable energy." In addition, 77 percent "don't trust Congress to implement tax credits for companies," and 65 percent said that wind power tax credits have been around "long enough," though 51 percent of voters said those tax credits are a "good thing."

## Corbett Present At Opening Of Pennsylvania's First CNG Fueling Station.

The [Philadelphia Inquirer](#) (9/10, Maykuth) reports that Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Corbett was at the opening of the state's "first retail compressed natural gas (CNG) fueling site" on Tuesday, which is located at a Philadelphia BP station. That pump is also the "first outlet" for VNG co, which is trying "to build out a national network of natural-gas fueling stations."

[KVVU-TV](#) Philadelphia (9/9, Tawa) reported from its website that VNG COO Robert Friedman "says Detroit automakers now realize that there is a long-lasting supply of natural gas to be extracted from shale areas," meaning that American car companies can maneuver towards making "more natural gas-operated, light-duty vehicles, including pickup trucks, vans, and passenger cars."

## Cellulosic Ethanol Producers Argue For Higher Federal Mandates.

[Reuters](#) (9/10, Rascoe) reports on a letter to President Obama from several companies involved in cellulosic ethanol, including POET LLC, Abengoa Bioenergy, and Dupont, in which they argued that Federal mandates for ethanol should be based on production capacity rather than on the availability of fuel pumps.

## UN: Atmospheric CO2 Increases Accelerated In 2013.

[Bloomberg News](#) (9/10, Watanabe) reports that the UN World Meteorological Organization released an email bulletin yesterday announcing that atmospheric greenhouse-gas concentrations rose to record heights in 2013, with CO2 levels in the air going up by "2.9 parts per million from the previous year, the largest annual increase since 1984," settling at 396 parts per million. WMO Secretary-General Michel Jarraud stated, "We know without any doubt that our climate is changing and our weather is becoming more extreme due to human activities such as the burning of fossil fuels."

## Kavulla Protests EPA Carbon Emissions Proposal As Detrimental To Montana.

The [Great Falls \(MT\) Tribune](#) (9/10, Kelly) reports that Montana Public Service Commissioner Travis Kavulla told a House Energy and Commerce subcommittee that EPA's Clean Power Plan "could unintentionally limit Montana's ability to use wind energy and penalize utilities that have already improved their energy efficiency," calling the agency's regulatory proposal "a cookie-cutter formula." The article presents Kavulla's complaints about the proposed carbon emission rules as typical for EPA's detractors, with Kavulla having said to Congress that it is the agency's "approach" specifically that he does not like. Kavulla stated, "Ironically, the many power plants that have already made such upgrades are penalized by the proposed rule because it is assumed that a further 6 percent reduction can be made."

## Tuesday's Lead Stories

- GM Launching Connected Vehicle Technology In 2017.
- Changes To EPA Gasoline Rules May Shake US Ethanol Industry.
- ORNL Working To 3-D Print A Car This Week.
- Seattle Tunneling Machine Moves Three Feet In Recent Test.
- FAA To Test Four Alternative General Aviation Fuels.
- Three Solar Projects To Be Built In Nevada.

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