The Transportation for Illinois Coalition was founded a little more than a year ago to focus primarily on the need for Illinois to fare well as Congress considered the multi-year transportation reauthorization scheduled to expire September 30, 2003. The individual member organizations recognized a common need, and the importance of pooling our resources and our efforts to the benefit of all Illinoisans.

One of the key motivations for the coalition came from members of the Illinois congressional delegation who suggested that Illinois’ poor showing during the previous reauthorization debate was due in part to Illinois interests failing to solidify their support for added money. More than one of our congressional leaders told us that diverse Illinois interests fragmented the lobbying effort for Illinois. By promoting specific projects in competition with each other, we seriously affected the state’s overall transportation funding fortunes. Many Illinois leaders have felt for the past six years that the state and its citizens lost millions of dollars for transportation projects because we lacked a common voice. TFIC seeks to remedy this problem.

While we were organized to focus on reauthorization, there is a future beyond 2003 for this organization. The reauthorization debate in Washington is far from complete. Optimistic estimates for passage of a new multi-year reauthorization call for action by the end of the first quarter of 2004, but this is not certain and the outcome remains unclear. The coalition members recognize that significant transportation initiatives are multi-year in nature and require sustained attention.

It is also apparent to members of the coalition that we need to immediately redirect our work toward the State of Illinois. With the demise of Illinois First bond monies for capital projects, and the current administration’s diversion of road funds to help balance the state budget, the future of Illinois’ road program is in jeopardy.

While the TFIC’s immediate focus has been devoted to highway and transit funding, we are conscious of major rail, waterways, and airport improvement plans that require federal, state and local government funding and cooperation. The TFIC will be fully engaged on these issues.

TFIC is poised to present a strong and unified voice to policymakers and opinion leaders at the federal, state and local levels to enhance transportation funding for Illinois. We are committed to the modernization and maintenance of Illinois’ highways, railways, waterways, airports and transit systems. This report summarizes what we have accomplished and what we have learned this first year.

Sincerely,

Doug Whitley
Chairman
Introduction

The Transportation for Illinois Coalition has developed over the past 15 months from a diverse group of business and organized labor interests into a strong and united force in support of Illinois' transportation infrastructure. Our first year accomplishments are summarized in the following pages.

However, the most significant accomplishment is, in fact, the melding of the diverse interests involved into a united and focused effort to support a strong transportation alliance for Illinois. The coalition has established a democratic manner of raising, discussing, and voting on issues and strategies that have enabled TFIC to move forward even through potentially divisive times. Our continued success will, we believe, mean economic success for Illinois and its citizens.

How to Become a Member

Membership in the TFIC is open to organizations, associations, unions, regional groups and chambers of commerce from throughout Illinois. Any organization that has members who know the importance of transportation to Illinois jobs and the economy is encouraged to join. Contact Doug Whitley at the Illinois State Chamber of Commerce (312/983-7103; dwhitley@ilchamber.org) in Chicago or any TFIC steering committee member.
I. Mission Statement

Understanding that transportation needs must be addressed comprehensively rather than in a piecemeal fashion was the driving force that united major transportation design and construction industry groups with labor and business throughout the state. This broad-based coalition has adopted the name, “Transportation for Illinois Coalition.”

The “Transportation for Illinois Coalition” (TFIC) was organized to speak with one voice for all Illinois regarding transportation funding needs. Organizations joining TFIC united behind the realization that, in the end, pursuing transportation resources either parochially or regionally is divisive and ineffective.

To accomplish its goal of uniting transportation interests, TFIC has and will continue to meet with government officials at all levels and promote transportation issues throughout the state. The TFIC focuses on principles and program concepts that will enable transportation leaders to move forward with a common purpose to obtain maximum federal funding to meet Illinois' infrastructure needs.

No program is more critical to the economy of Illinois than federal funding for transportation needs. From its origins as the railroad capital of the nation and its development as the hub of major east-west interstate highways, to hosting the world’s busiest airport and serving as a vital link for the nation’s water traffic, Illinois has served as the central conduit for the nation’s commerce. Thus, the economies of Illinois and the nation are inextricably related.

Illinois’ transportation system plays a pivotal role in the nation’s ability to move goods and people because of its geographic location and extensive road, rail, airport and waterway network.

- The state hosts the nation’s third largest interstate highway network with five of the transcontinental interstates moving traffic through Illinois.

- Two of the nation’s top rail freight gateways are located in Illinois, with the Chicago region serving as the nation’s rail hub. Six of the seven major railroads in the nation converge in Chicago. Nearly one-third of the nation’s total rail shipments pass through the Chicago region.

- Illinois’ airport system is the second largest in the nation. O’Hare International Airport has become an international gateway and is the nation’s busiest airport with nearly 912,000 takeoffs and landings in 2001.

- Illinois ranks seventh in U.S. waterborne traffic, handling more than 114 million tons of cargo annually.
Maintaining its role as the transportation hub of the nation is a vital economic strategy for Illinois. Challenges to the quality and capacity of the Illinois transportation system are extensive and rising.

It is well documented that highway congestion in the northeastern portion of the state is the third worst in the nation.

Illinois’ rail system is in urgent need of more effective switching and efficient freight handling capacity. There is also a critical need for grade separation, (overpasses and underpasses) to eliminate conflicts between trains and vehicular traffic, thus improving the safety of both road and railway systems.

Lock improvements and modernization of Illinois’ river systems will allow the state to keep pace with cargo traffic on our waterways.

Rising demand for air travel and the safety needs for people and cargo must be addressed through modernization of the Illinois airport system in ways that meet the needs of all the nation’s citizens.

In order to speak with one voice about these issues, TFIC has consciously avoided prioritizing projects or programs because to do so has, in the past, resulted in division and parochialism along modal or geographic lines.

While TFIC’s constituent groups may debate the relative importance of any specific mode of transportation, program or project, all agree that the comprehensive approach to transportation funding is the best hope for improving all transportation systems throughout the state and call upon our elected officials in Illinois and Washington to do likewise.

**TFIC in Washington, D.C.**

TFIC Chairman Doug Whitley with Illinois Congressman Ray LaHood

AFL-CIO President Margaret Blacksheere with Illinois Senator Dick Durbin and Doug Whitley, President of the Illinois State Chamber of Commerce.

Margaret Blacksheere with Illinois Congressman Luis Gutierrez.
II. Guiding Principles

- TFIC supports increased funding levels for our National Transportation System.

- TFIC supports increasing Illinois’ share of transportation funding significantly above the 3.38 percent guarantee in TEA-21. We will support the Illinois congressional delegation in proposals they recommend that will bring the additional required resources to Illinois, including options that would bring new resources into the Highway Trust Fund.

- TFIC supports the “firewalls” contained in TEA-21 to ensure funds that are generated by highway users and other transportation-related revenues are spent only on transportation needs.

- TFIC supports maintaining the current highway/transit funding ratio of 80-20.

- TFIC supports distribution of all transit formula funds according to needs-based formulas.

- TFIC supports crediting the Highway Trust Fund with the “earned interest” on its unexpended balances.

- TFIC supports transportation user fees as dedicated funds and opposes diverting any of those funds for purposes other than for roads, bridges, and public safety.

TFIC in Collinsville

Jim Pennekamp of the Leadership Council of Southwest Illinois addresses the crowd at the November 2002 breakfast meeting in Collinsville.
III. TFIC First Year Highlights

Growing Organization

TFIC has developed over the course of its first year into a democratic and cohesive group of interests united by the shared understanding that Illinois’ transportation network is critical to its economic success. Beginning with a handful of interested organizations, the coalition has grown to include more than 30 statewide, community and regional organizations. TFIC is partnering with other like-minded organizations, such as the Business Leaders for Transportation and local and regional chambers of commerce throughout the state, moving shoulder-to-shoulder to win more federal funding for Illinois’ transportation needs. The coalition operates through a governing committee, the TFIC Steering Committee, and a series of subcommittees. The coalition has hired a Springfield-based grassroots and public affairs firm and a Washington-based lobbying firm to assist in its efforts.

Public Outreach

An important aspect of TFIC’s mission is to help educate Illinoisans using public briefings and media coverage about federal transportation funding and the important role it plays in Illinois’ economy. Toward that end, TFIC coordinated and co-hosted four transportation breakfast briefings in key congressional districts. These were intentionally coordinated with local chambers, business organizations and organized labor, and were held in communities represented by congressmen who hold strategic committee memberships. Nearly 500 people attended these briefings in Naperville, Deerfield, Champaign and Collinsville. These briefings helped kick off the TFIC effort, and generated media and membership interest.

A September 2003 breakfast briefing modeled after the first four successful events highlighted the transportation funding issue for businesses and individuals in the northwest suburban area of Chicago. Co-hosted by TFIC, Business Leaders for Transportation, and several local chambers of commerce in the northwest suburban area, the briefing represented another opportunity to reach out to the general public.

Coalition leaders have made other efforts throughout the year to reach interested businesses and individuals, including speaking engagements at statewide conferences highlighting transportation as a critical issue for the state’s economy and its workers.
Outreach to Congress

On April 7th, U.S. Senator James Inhofe, chair of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, brought his committee to Chicago for an in-district field hearing on transportation funding needs. TFIC outreach to Senator Peter Fitzgerald, a member of the committee, helped facilitate this hearing. Three panels of witnesses testified, including Tim Martin, Secretary of the Illinois Department of Transportation; Miguel D’Escoto, director of the Chicago Department of Transportation, and Doug Whitley, president of the Illinois State Chamber of Commerce and chair of the Transportation for Illinois Coalition. Other TFIC members testifying were: Margaret Blacksheere, president of the Illinois AFL-CIO; and Jim Pennekamp, executive director of Leadership Council Southwestern Illinois.

At Home: TFIC encourages its member organizations and their members to keep in touch with congressmen when these leaders are home in Illinois. Several coalition members visit with their congressmen on a regular basis. TFIC also scheduled two in-district meetings with Congressmen LaHood and Weller during the August recess to reiterate the importance of additional federal funding for Illinois. Congressman LaHood is on House Appropriations and Congressman Weller is on House Ways and Means.

TFIC members are expected to have and maintain relationships with elected officials at the state and federal levels on an ongoing basis. Our members should be active with the congressional delegation and state lawmakers so that the collected effort of TFIC members allows the coalition to interface with the entire congressional and state policymaking team. TFIC can also help coalition members to nurture relationships with elected officials through events, lobby days, fundraising opportunities and other means.

In Washington, D.C.: Member organizations have traveled to the nation’s capital many times during the past year, taking copies of the TFIC mission statement and talking with the delegation about transportation funding. Washington lobby days for TFIC member organizations were scheduled for March 17-19, April 29-30, September 10-11, September 15-18, and early October 2003.
Outreach to Local Governments and Organizations

In an attempt to broaden the appeal to Congress for more transportation funds for Illinois, TFIC drafted a resolution for use and adoption by local governments and local chambers of commerce. The resolution calls on Congress to increase the total funding for transportation and to increase Illinois’ share of the nation’s total. Several local governments and chambers have adopted the resolution and forwarded it to the appropriate congressional offices.

Media Outreach

Though the organization is newly formed, TFIC is beginning to be recognized among the statewide media as a source of information on the federal transportation reauthorization bill. This is the result of outreach by the coalition beginning in January to the state’s transportation reporters. Initially, the coalition sent letters to these reporters, and has followed up several times since with phone calls. Coalition leaders have distributed two op-ed pieces to targeted media outlets. Coalition organization members have responded to media coverage in their local newspapers by sending letters to the editor.

In August 2003, TFIC joined with Business Leaders for Transportation and the Metropolitan Planning Council to issue a joint press release calling on Congress to approve a multi-year transportation reauthorization measure with funding of $375 billion. This historic combined announcement underscores the breadth and depth of support for additional transportation funding for Illinois.
Highlights of the media coverage TFIC has helped generate to underscore the importance of federal transportation funding increases include:

- Coverage of transportation reauthorization’s affect on local areas where TFIC transportation briefings were held;
- Banner stories in the Daily Southtown and Chicago Tribune about the need for increased federal funding
- Editorials against diversions of money from the road fund for general government use in Peoria, Aurora, Decatur, and Carbondale newspapers.

Keeping Members Informed

Since January 2003, the TFIC has distributed 18 biweekly e-mails outlining the latest transportation-related news from Washington, D.C. and from the state capitol. TFIC will continue this electronic update for all coalition members and their member organizations.

The free flow of information to coalition members is one of the group’s priorities. Updates from Washington, articles of interest from throughout the country and other bits of information relevant to the transportation reauthorization and transportation funding are distributed for members who bring them to the attention of the coalition staff. The goal is to promote a shared understanding of the latest developments affecting our transportation funding. These updates are forwarded with attribution to the member who alerted us to the information and are not edited or censored by the coalition.

If you or your organization would like to be added to the e-mail distribution list, please contact Helen Adorjan at: hadorjan@fgi.net.

Mike Scholefield, representing the Chicago Southland Chamber of Commerce, makes a point at one of the breakfast meetings. Seated is Mary Clumpner, also of the Southland Chamber.

Dick Smith, Director of the Office of Planning and Program for the Illinois Department of Transportation, answers questions at an event.

Illinois Congressman Mark Kirk, left, talks with TFIC chair Doug Whitley.
Subcommittee Development

As the discussions about transportation and federal and state actions affecting funding have evolved, TFIC has seen the need to develop working groups to delve into specific areas of interest. We have created and continue to maintain subcommittees to do this work.

**Policy Subcommittee:** This group wrestled with the language of the TFIC mission statement and guiding principles, developing a statement that all members of the coalition have endorsed.

**Washington, D.C. Subcommittee:** This group keeps track of and coordinates visits to Washington by coalition member organizations. They are responsible for keeping the calendar of Washington activities. The subcommittee also works to develop a comprehensive approach to successfully lobbying Congress and the administration for more transportation funding. The subcommittee met early in the year, and helped identify Washington-based professionals who are advising the coalition. The subcommittee also suggested development of a second subcommittee, the Washington, D.C. Fly-in subcommittee, which focuses on the timing and coordination of TFIC lobby days in Washington.

**Membership Subcommittee:** As the TFIC continued to grow, and nonmembers were contacting TFIC members with requests to join, the steering committee appointed a membership committee to take a more comprehensive approach to new member recruitment. This membership subcommittee has solicited new members through mailings and phone calls and continues to try to identify organizations that might want to join TFIC’s efforts.

**Messages Subcommittee:** This subcommittee was created to develop and coordinate messages for the U.S. Senate Committee field hearing on transportation in Chicago on April 7th. It remains in place to address future message refinement needs.

**Transit Subcommittee:** An important transportation constituency in Illinois is the mass transit interest. This subcommittee exists to act as a liaison to the transit community.

**Constitutional Amendment Subcommittee:** This subcommittee has been appointed to research, along with outside legal assistance, the possible means of protecting road monies in the future. It was created following the largest diversion of road funds in Illinois history for the support of other governmental spending.
IV. Steering Committee

Chris Agnitsch — Rockford-Winnebago County Better Roads Association
Jerri Andrew — McLean County Chamber of Commerce
Rick Baker — Illinois Quad City Chamber of Commerce
Margaret Blacksheere — Illinois AFL-CIO
Kirk Brown — Consulting Engineers Council of Illinois
Mary Clumpner — Chicago Southland Chamber
Fred Crews — Egyptian Contractors Association, Inc.
Monty Docter — Maclair Asphalt Co. Inc.
Mary Effrein — Quincy Area Chamber of Commerce
Patrice Ekins — Underground Contractors Association
Wayne Emmer — Illinois Cement Company
Eric Fields — The Associated General Contractors of Illinois
David Foree — Southwestern Illinois Building and Construction Trades
Dennis Gannon — Chicago Federation of Labor
Tim Garvey — Southern Illinois Construction Advancement Program
Keith Gleason — Illinois Conference of Teamsters and Teamsters Jt. Council 65
Don Gorman — Mid-Central Illinois Regional Council of Carpenters
Bill Grams — Illinois Road and Transportation Builders Association
Steve Hatcher — Greater Aurora Chamber of Commerce
John Henriksen — Illinois Association of Aggregate Producers
John Hudson — Operating Engineers Local Unions No. 965
David Kennedy — Consulting Engineers Council of Illinois
Amy Looten — Quincy Area Chamber of Commerce
Holly Lown — Metra
Roger Marquardt — American Concrete Pavement Association
John McGovern — Underground Contractors Association
Julie Moore — Chamber of Commerce for Decatur and Macon County
Steve Nailor — Rockford-Winnebago County Better Roads Association
Rob Nash — Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce
Chris Newkirk — Precast/Prestressed Producers of Illinois and Wisconsin
William Orrill — Laborers-Employers Cooperation and Education Trust
Satch Pecori — Consulting Engineers Council of Illinois
Jim Pennekamp — Leadership Council of Southwest Illinois
Dick Rawlings — Jacksonville Area Chamber of Commerce
David Rock — Underground Contractors Association
Roger Schoenekase — Mid-Central Illinois Regional Council of Carpenters
Michael Scholefield — Chicago Southland Chamber
Jim Schwarz — Route 51 Coalition
Mike Skarr — Naperville Area Chamber of Commerce
Marvin Traylor — Illinois Asphalt Pavement Association
Joe Ward — I.U.O.E Local 150
Bradley Warren — The Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce
Vince Waters — American Concrete Pavement Association, Illinois
Laura Weis — Champaign County Chamber of Commerce
Doug Whitley — Illinois State Chamber of Commerce
Mike Zahn — Operating Engineers Local Unions No. 965
TFIC Subcommittees

Policy Subcommittee:
Bill Grams, chair
Monty Docter
Eric Fields
Steve Hatcher
John Henriksen
David Kennedy
Bill Orrill
Brad Warren

Membership Subcommittee:
Eric Fields, Chair
Bill Grams
John Henriksen
David Kennedy
Bill Orrill/Saun Stott
Doug Whitley
Mike Zahn

Transit Subcommittee:
Bill Grams
Mike Scholefield
Laura Weis

Messages Subcommittee:
Margaret Blacksheere
Doug Whitley
Bill Grams
Eric Fields
Steve Nailor

D.C. subcommittee:
Doug Whitley, chair
Mary Clumpner
Tim Garvey
John Henriksen
Satch Pecori
Jim Pennekamp

D.C. Fly-In Subcommittee:
John Henriksen
David Kennedy
Bill Looby (AFL-CIO)

Constitutional Amendment Subcommittee:
David Kennedy, chair
Monty Docter
Eric Fields
Bill Grams
Mike Zahn
U.S. Senators from Illinois

Richard J. Durbin
Democrat
dick@durbin.senate.gov
332 Dirksen Senate Office Bld.
Washington, DC 20510
Phone: 202-224-2152
Fax: 202-228-0400
230 South Dearborn St. #3892
Chicago, IL 60604
Phone: 312-353-4952
Fax: 312-353-0150
525 South Eighth Street
Springfield, IL 62703
Phone: 217-492-4152
Fax: 217-492-4382

Peter G. Fitzgerald
Republican
senator_fitzgerald@fitzgerald.senate.gov
555 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510
Phone: 202-224-2854
Fax: 202-228-1372
520 South Eighth Street
Springfield, IL 62703
Phone: 217-492-5089
Fax: 217-492-5099
230 South Dearborn Street
Suite 3900
Chicago, IL 60604
Phone: 312-386-3506
Fax: 312-386-3514
Ginger Creek Village
Suite 7B
GlenCarbon, IL 62034
Phone: 618-692-0364
Fax: 618-692-1499
115 West First Street
Suite 100
Dixon, IL 61021
Phone: 815-288-3140
Fax: 815-288-3147

U.S. Representatives from Illinois

District 1
Bobby L. Rush
Democrat
bobby.rush@mail.house.gov
2416 Rayburn Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: 202-225-4372
Fax: 202-226-0333
700 East 79th Street
Chicago, IL 60619
Phone: 773-224-6500
Fax: 773-224-9624

District 2
Jesse L. Jackson Jr.
Democrat
comments@jessejacksonjr.org
2419 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: 202-225-0773
Fax: 202-225-0899
17926 South Halsted
Chicago, IL 60619
Phone: 773-224-6500
Fax: 773-224-9624

District 3
William O. Lipinski
Democrat
williamlipinski@housemail.house.gov
2188 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: 202-225-5701
Fax: 202-225-1012
5832 S. Archer Avenue
Chicago, IL 60638
Phone: 312-886-0481
Fax: 773-767-9395
5239 West 95th Street
Oak Lawn, IL 60453
Phone: 708/952-0860
Fax: 773-767-9395

District 4
Luis V. Gutierrez
Democrat
luis.gutierrez@mail.house.gov
2367 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: 202/225-8203
Fax: 202/225-7810
3455 West North Ave.
Chicago, IL 60647
Phone: 773-384-1655
Fax: 773-384-1685
1310 West 18th Street
Chicago, IL 60608
Phone: 312/666-3882

District 5
Rahm Emanuel
Democrat
1319 Longworth House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: 202-225-4061
Fax: N/A
3742 West Irving Park Rd
Chicago, IL 60618
Phone: 773-267-5926
Fax: 773-267-6583

District 6
Henry J. Hyde
Republican
1531 Longworth House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: 202-225-5006
Fax: 202-225-5641
3333 W. Arthington
Chicago, IL 60624
Phone: 773-533-7520
Fax: 773-533-7530

District 7
Danny K Davis
Democrat
2222 Longworth House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: 202-225-5006
Fax: 202-225-5641
3333 W. Arthington
Chicago, IL 60624
Phone: 773-533-7520
Fax: 773-533-7530

District 8
Philip M. Crane
Republican
233 Cannon House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: 202-225-3711
Fax: 202-225-7830
300 N. Milwaukee Avenue, Ste. 3
Lake Villa, IL 60046
Phone: 847-265-9000
Fax: 847-265-9023
1100 West Northwest Highway
Palatine, IL 60067
Phone: 847-358-9160
Fax: 847-358-9185

District 9
Janice D. Schakowsky
Democrat
jan.schakowsky@mail.house.gov
5533 N. Broadway
Chicago, IL 60640
Phone: 773-506-7100
Fax: 773-506-9202

District 10
Mark Steven Kirk
Republican
rep.kirk@mail.house.gov
102 Wilmot Road
Ste. 200
Deerfield, IL 60015
Phone: 847/940-0202
Fax: 847/940-7143
20 South Martin Luther King Dr.
Waukegan, IL 60085
Phone: 847/662-0101
Fax: 847/662-7519
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District 14</td>
<td>J. Dennis Hastert</td>
<td>Republican</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dhastert@mail.house.gov">dhastert@mail.house.gov</a></td>
<td>225 Cannon House Office Bldg Washington, DC 20515</td>
<td>Phone: 202-225-2371 Fax: 202-226-0791</td>
<td>119 W. First St. Dixon, IL 61021</td>
<td>Phone: 815/288-0680 Fax: 815/288-0743</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District 15</td>
<td>Timothy V. Johnson</td>
<td>Republican</td>
<td><a href="mailto:repjohnson@mail.house.gov">repjohnson@mail.house.gov</a></td>
<td>1229 Longworth House Office Bldg Washington, DC 20515</td>
<td>Phone: 202-225-5905 Fax: 202-225-5396</td>
<td>1535 47th Avenue Ste. 5 Moline, IL 61265</td>
<td>Phone: 309/762-9193 Fax: 309/762-9193</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District 17</td>
<td>Lane Evans</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lane.evans@mail.house.gov">lane.evans@mail.house.gov</a></td>
<td>2211 Rayburn House Office Bldg Washington, DC 20515</td>
<td>Phone: 202-225-6201 Fax: 202-225-6201</td>
<td>209 West State Street Jacksonville, IL 62650</td>
<td>Phone: 217-245-1431 Fax: 217-243-6852</td>
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email: TFICUpdate@ILChamber.org