



For Immediate Release
February 20, 2008

Contact:
Doug Whitley: 312/802-8005
Michael Carrigan: 217/544-4014

TFIC PLEASED TRANSPORTATION FUNDING MENTIONED IN BUDGET PROPOSAL

Leaders from the Illinois business, labor, local government and transportation industries today said they were pleased that the Governor proposed a transportation capital investment package in his Fiscal Year 2009 budget, but cautioned lawmakers and the public that the size of the capital program being proposed appears to be so modest that, if approved, would require lawmakers to revisit transportation funding in just two or three years.

“For years, the members of the Transportation for Illinois Coalition have worked to make investment in our transportation infrastructure a priority of state lawmakers and the Governor, and we are encouraged that the issue has risen to a level of prominence,” said Doug Whitley, president of the Illinois Chamber of Commerce and co-chair of TFIC. “Unfortunately, the modest size of this proposal makes it clear that, though some investment will be made, we won’t come close to meeting the needs of the infrastructure in any significant way. If a proposal of this modest size is approved this year, we will all be back in Springfield in two or three years to approve a new funding package that will enable the state to invest adequately in our transportation infrastructure to ensure our economy is not crippled.”

TFIC has identified unfunded needs of \$10.8 billion for highways and \$10.3 billion for transit. Additionally, these numbers do not reflect the needs of CREATE, passenger rail and



airports, which also need funding. Unless an additional one billion dollars is invested in repairing existing state highways during the next five years, the miles of state roads in bad condition will more than double -- and that does not include the additional funding needed to rehabilitate existing bridges and rebuild aging Interstates. RTA transit capital funding averaged over \$900 million per year from 2000-2004. However, in 2007 only about \$480 million was available for capital projects. Without sufficient investment in basic system maintenance and preservation of infrastructure, service performance and reliability will deteriorate due to more frequent vehicle breakdowns on bus systems and increased slow zones on rail systems.

Additional funding is also needed for CREATE, passenger rail and airports.

“The number of workers who will be working this year as a result of this proposal is modest, but it is an improvement over the past few years,” Carrigan said. “The members of organized labor in Illinois are pleased to see a specific proposal from the Governor and have been working with members of the General Assembly to promote passage of a capital investment package for months now. We hope the Governor’s proposal helps to move discussions on adequate investment and that ultimately we will increase the investment levels being proposed so that more working men and women and the businesses that employ them can participate fully in a healthy Illinois economy.”

In 2006, TFIC helped finance a study of the cost of maintaining, improving and expanding the state’s transportation infrastructure which pegged the necessary investment at \$4.6 billion in *additional* spending *every year* over a five year period. Illinois currently appropriates



only \$2.7 billion on the infrastructure each year, which is woefully inadequate to address the need.

“State capital appropriations this year supported 20,000 fewer jobs than they did just five years ago. That means men and women not working, and as a result going without health insurance or wages, because Illinois lawmakers haven’t approved a capital spending plan for transportation,” said Carrigan. “We all know that the economy is slipping. The best thing Illinois can do is invest its tax money in our own workers, businesses and transportation infrastructure.”

TFIC is proposing a modest increase in some traditional highway user fees to help finance a larger transportation capital program.

TFIC is a diverse group of statewide and regional business, labor, industry, not-for-profit and governmental organizations that have joined together in a united and focused effort to support a strong transportation alliance for Illinois. The Coalition takes a comprehensive approach and seeks to speak with one voice for all of Illinois when it comes to transportation funding needs at the federal and state level. This comprehensive approach involves all modes of transportation, including rail, air, water, highways and mass transit. For more information about TFIC, visit www.TFICIllinois.org.