**Wednesday Weekly: Wednesday March 27th**

TFIC’s regular legislative briefing on Wednesday, March 27, featured a deeper dive into the stark reality of Illinois’ transportation woes with Mary Craighead, a transportation analyst with the Illinois Economic Policy Institute.

Mary’s presentation to the group noted:

·         Illinois has one of the most critical infrastructure systems in the nation: 3rd most road, bridge and interstate mileage, behind only Texas and California; 2nd in railway miles; 8th in waterway miles used for transportation

·         Miles traveled in Illinois are up 55 percent from 1984 to 2017, although they are largely flat over the last dozen years

·         Illinois’ transportation needs are tremendous, and the outlook is bleak if no new funding is found: an 85 percent increase in the backlog of roadway miles needing attention between 2000-2015, and an expected 100 percent increase between 2016-2023; a 65 percent increase in the expected bridge backlog between 2016-2023

o   The percentage of Illinois roads in poor condition has more than doubled since 2001

o   While traffic fatalities and serious injuries have declined, there were still more than 12,500 in 2014

·         Exacerbating the problem is the decline of motor fuel tax revenues: $1.8 billion in 1999, $1.3 billion in 2016

IEPI estimates needing $4.6 billion a year to address state road, bridge and RTA/downstate transit needs

·         A new proposal from IUOE Local 150 would make progress toward that goal by doubling the motor fuel tax and adding $50 to registration fees, generating about $1.9 billion more a year

Mary’s conclusion: Transportation needs are great and change is needed. Without action, these needs will continue to grow and become more costly. As society modernizes – more freight traffic on the roads, autonomous vehicles providing new avenues for business and travel growth – Illinois also will need to adapt its infrastructure system.