



Ohio Council Of Local Sections  
Akron-Canton, Central Ohio, Cincinnati,  
Cleveland, Dayton, Toledo

## NEWS RELEASE

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**CONTACT:**  
Kevin Carpenter  
614- 634-7360

### **OHIO'S INFRASTRUCTURE RECEIVES A GRADE OF "C-"**

The Ohio Council of Local Sections of the American Society of Civil Engineers says that an investment of more than \$46 billion is needed to address pressing issues

**Columbus, Ohio** – The Ohio Council of Local Sections of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) released its *2009 Ohio Infrastructure Report Card* today that gives Ohio's infrastructure a grade of "C-". The report graded the current condition of ten infrastructure areas that are essential to the state's economic prosperity and quality of life. Areas graded are aviation, bridges, dams, drinking water, electricity, parks and recreation, railroads, roads, schools, and wastewater. The ASCE Ohio Council estimates that an investment in infrastructure renewal of more than \$46 Billion is needed over the next five years to address the state's crumbling infrastructure.

This assessment of Ohio's infrastructure follows the January 28, 2009 national release by ASCE of its fourth *Report Card for America's Infrastructure, The 2009 Report Card for America's Infrastructure*. This report card, like its predecessors, was designed to provide a grade for the current condition of components of America's crumbling infrastructure, raise public awareness, stimulate debate, and propose, highlight, and promote solutions. ASCE graded the nation's overall infrastructure condition as a "D", and estimated the projected cost for repairing the nation's infrastructure as \$2.2 Trillion over the next five years. ASCE has called for a renewed partnership between citizens; local, state, and the federal governments; and the private sector to work together to define the most critical projects and get the support needed for immediate action.

Ohio's infrastructure grades ranged from a high of "B-" for bridges to a low of "D" for roads. The areas of drinking water and wastewater also had low grades of "D+". There are reasons for concern and need for investment in all the areas evaluated in the report. A brief summary of the assessment follows. Please access or print a copy of the *2009 Ohio Infrastructure Report Card* by visiting the Ohio Council of Local Sections of ASCE website at <http://ohioasce.org/>.

Aviation infrastructure in Ohio received a grade of "C-". Ohio ranks third in the nation with 124 paved and lighted general aviation airports. Only 58 percent of runways, 57 percent of taxiways, and 62 percent of aprons (the area where aircraft are parked, loaded, and unloaded) meet the satisfactory condition index. These percentages are below Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) Office of Aviation established goals. Ohio's commercial service airports are meeting capacity requirements. ODOT has estimated that \$9.8 million a year is needed to maintain airports at their existing condition and an additional \$117 million is required to provide improvements to meet the state systems goal that 85% of runways, 80% of taxiways, and 75% of aprons have a satisfactory rating.

Bridges in Ohio received a grade of "B-". Bridges in Ohio are crucial components of one of the largest transportation systems in the United States. Many bridges in Ohio have reached their expected service life and are in need of rehabilitation or replacement. The council estimates that it would cost \$3.6 billion to replace all the structurally deficient bridges and rehabilitate two-thirds of the functionally obsolete bridges in Ohio. This estimate does not include any design, roadway, nor land acquisition costs associated with these projects.

Dams in Ohio received a grade of "C". There are more than 2,600 dams in the state of Ohio. Nearly 70 percent of dams are privately owned. There were 1,597 state-regulated dams in Ohio in 2007. Of the state-regulated dams, 33 percent are rated as being deficient. It is estimated that \$309 million is required to make repairs to the 524 deficient dams in the state. As of 2007, 43 percent of Ohio's high hazard dams had Emergency Action Plans (EAP), a key measure in reducing the risk to the public. An EAP is a formal document that identifies potential emergency conditions at a dam and specifies pre-planned actions to be followed to minimize property damage or loss of life in the event of a dam failure.

Drinking water infrastructure in Ohio received a grade of "D+". Approximately 90 percent of Ohioans receive water for daily needs from one of the more than 6,000 public water supply systems in the state. An estimated 99 percent of the burden for funding public water supply is borne by the local government agency. ASCE estimates that Ohio has \$9.68 billion in drinking water infrastructure needs. The Ohio EPA Division of Drinking and Ground Water estimates that drinking water stimulus project funds will total approximately \$58.5 million under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. As of April, 2009, the Ohio EPA had received project funding requests for more than 1,400 projects for a total of \$3 billion.

Electricity infrastructure in Ohio received a grade of "C+". Electric generation, transmission, and distribution systems in Ohio are satisfactory, reliability problems are relatively

few, and those that exist are being addressed by system improvements. However, mandates related to alternative energy and environmental protection pose problems for Ohio's electric utilities in the future. In 2008, the Ohio legislature passed a bill that requires that 12.5 percent of energy come from alternative energy sources (including renewable, conservation, and clean thermal) by 2024. Furthermore, federal regulations may have a great impact on Ohio's electric generating capacity, as approximately two thirds of our electricity is provided by coal. There is a strong possibility that coal-fired generation will be required to drastically reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the future which could impose large financial burdens on our current system.

Parks and recreation infrastructure in Ohio received a grade of "C-". Park systems in Ohio provide a crucial economic element in terms of jobs and financial impact. An additional \$26.5 million is needed each year to properly operate the state parks and other divisions, and an additional \$29.9 million is needed annually to eliminate the maintenance backlog over the next 10 to 20 years. These same needs are also being felt at the local levels as well. Facilities at many urban recreation centers are past their expected service life and are in need of repairs or at risk of being closed for health and safety reasons. A study by the Ohio State University in 2004 stated that people visiting Ohio's state parks alone contribute an estimated \$1.1 billion to the state's economy annually.

Railroads in Ohio received a grade of "C-". Railroads provide critical services to industries important to Ohio's economy, hauling raw materials, parts, and finished products. Railroads are also an important industry in Ohio, employing more than 8,000 workers and paying approximately \$500 million in wages in the state. ODOT has estimated that the cost to improve the 30 worst railroad choke points in the state would cost \$1.19 billion. There are nearly 16,000 railroad crossings within the state. Since 1990, motor vehicle/train crashes at grade crossings have declined 66% and the number of fatalities has dropped 77 percent. However, between 2005 and 2008 there were still 482 accidents, including 45 fatalities. Columbus is the second largest and Dayton the sixth largest city in the U.S. without passenger rail services.

Roads in Ohio received a grade of "D". With over 125,000 miles of roads, Ohio has one of the largest and most utilized roadway networks in the United States. ASCE found that 43 percent of Ohio's roads are in critical, poor, or fair condition. It is estimated that by the year 2014, Ohio will have a highway budget shortfall of more than \$10 billion at the state government level alone. Congestion in the large urbanized areas in Ohio is getting worse. Each year, the Texas Transportation Institute publishes a ranking of highway congestion in the 50 largest urban areas throughout the U.S., as ranked by hours of delay per person. In 2002, Columbus was

ranked 41st nationally and was the only Ohio city included. By 2005, Columbus' ranking rose to 34th, and Cincinnati and Cleveland joined Columbus as Ohio cities included on the list (ranked 40th and 49th, respectively).

School infrastructure in Ohio received a grade of "C". The quality of schools in Ohio is crucial to the state's long-term viability and ability to compete in the global marketplace. The American Federation of Teachers estimated in 2008 that Ohio schools require \$9.32 billion in infrastructure investment. This ranks Ohio 6th in the country for total funds needed. The Ohio School Facilities Commission (OSFC) was created in 1997 as a separate state agency to oversee the rebuilding of Ohio's public schools in 614 school districts. During the 1998-2007 fiscal years, the OSFC managed yearly appropriations across all its programs totaling \$5.92 billion, or approximately \$592 million per year. In 2007, the OSFC reported that all facility needs in 123 school districts have been fully addressed.

Wastewater infrastructure in Ohio received a grade of "D+". Aging systems discharge billions of gallons of untreated wastewater into U.S. surface waters each year. An estimated 95 percent of the burden for funding municipal wastewater treatment systems is borne by local government. It is estimated that Ohio has \$11.16 billion in wastewater infrastructure needs. It is clear that operations, maintenance, and capital investments in wastewater treatment facilities are not keeping up with the decaying infrastructure and the increasing demand placed on these facilities. Older systems that mingle storm and wastewater collection systems are plagued by chronic overflows during major rainstorms and heavy snowmelt, which results in the discharge of raw sewage into surface waters. The U.S. EPA estimated that the volume of combined sewer overflows discharged nationwide is 850 billion gallons per year. According to the U.S. EPA, sanitary sewer overflows, caused by blocked or broken pipes, resulted in the release of as much as 10 billion gallons of raw sewage annually.

ASCE's Board of Directors has been giving special attention to improving America's infrastructure on several fronts, including championing the need for investments in infrastructure renewal with policy makers at the national, state and local level. As part of this effort, and to broaden the dialog on infrastructure renewal, ASCE has been encouraging its Sections and Branches to develop and promote Infrastructure Report Cards for their region, state, and city or county. Sections and Branches can localize the national Report Card by focusing on infrastructure that is relevant to their region, state, or local area.

The Ohio Council of Local Sections of ASCE is the body that addresses statewide issues and shares ideas and practices from the six ASCE Sections in Ohio. The Ohio Council is



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composed of delegates elected annually from each of the six Sections: Akron/Canton, Central Ohio, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dayton, and Toledo. The Ohio Council in 2008 formed a committee to prepare an Infrastructure Report Card for the State of Ohio. The *2009 Ohio Infrastructure Report Card* is the result of that effort.

ASCE is a not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) organization. Founded in 1852, ASCE is celebrating its 157<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2009. ASCE represents more than 140,000 civil engineers worldwide and is America's oldest engineering society.