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Missouri State Highway Commission Missouri State Highway Department



History • Organization • Needs • Future

Introduction

On September 22, 1978, members of the Missouri State Highway Commission and staff members of the Missouri State Highway Department met with a committee of the Missouri State House of Representatives to outline for the state legislators the history, organization, needs, and future of the State Highway Commission and the State Highway Department. That meeting provided the framework for the contents of this booklet.

The State Highway Commission and State Highway Department are distributing the booklet in the hope that it will prove informative. Questions and comments concerning its content are welcome.

Synopsis

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- 19th Century-Railroads
- 20th Century-Highways

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- Created Statewide Highway System

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Ultimately, the people



Transportation Beginnings: In the Nation, In Missouri

Two centuries ago, America's transportation efforts were concentrated along its coastal and inland waterways, and the new nation's first cities were its seaports and river-towns. Then the emergence of a rail system gave the American hinterlands access to the ports and harbors of the Eastern Seaboard and the major rivers running to it. The development of that railroad system and its surging westward thrust were the dominant facts in American transportation during the 19th Century. But as the 20th Century dawned, it was evident that if the produce of this developing agricultural nation was to move with decent speed and efficiency from its farms to its railheads and waterports, some kind of road system had to be developed. The rudiments of such a system had existed clear back into Colonial days, and beyond. What was required was that those disjointed bits and pieces be systematized into some sort of coherent whole.

Since most of the products to be moved in this country at the beginning of this century were agricultural, it was natural that the first comprehensive programs of road improvement and construction carried on were administered by the Departments of Agriculture of the federal government and the several states. As these road programs began to take shape, the internal combustion engine clattered onto the American scene. The motor vehicles it powered rapidly replaced animal-powered vehicles in drayage and as people-movers, and the nation's fledgling highway systems both hastened the change and were themselves given further impetus by it.

The Centennial Road Law

Here in Missouri, a four-member bi-partisan State Highway Board was created within the State Department of Agriculture in 1917. The Board's functions were largely advisory and promotional. In the early 1920's a group of interested Missourians met in Chillicothe and urged the development of a more comprehensive road program, the organization of a State Highway Commission, the dedication of highway-user-generated monies for road purposes, and the formation of an engineering college at the University of Missouri. That Chillicothe meeting—and others much like it which had been held across Missouri in the second decade of the 1900s—did much to generate the interest in better roads for Missouri which culminated in 1921 in the enactment of Missouri's Centennial Road Law.

The Centennial Road Law provided for a four member bi-partisan State Highway Commission. It also empowered the Commission to appoint a Chief Engineer, a Chief Counsel, and a Secretary.

Commission Appoints:

- **Chief Engineer**
- **Chief Counsel**
- **Secretary to the Commission**

The Chief Engineer is the State Highway Department's top administrative officer, and with the consent and approval of the Commission, appoints and prescribes the duties and authority of an Assistant Chief Engineer and such other engineers, department heads, and other employees as the Commission may designate and deem necessary. The Commission also employs a Chief Counsel, "who shall possess the same qualifications as judges of the Supreme Court." The Commission also appoints a secretary who is charged with record keeping and custodial functions involving Commission and Department business.

In addition to establishing the State Highway Commission, The Centennial Road Law designated a system of roads for construction. These reached into every county in Missouri and linked the state's population centers. The essentials of the state's primary highway system of today can be seen in that system of roads originally set out in the Centennial Road Law. But the law provided only for roads connecting Missouri's cities and towns. It was not until the approval of the State Constitution of 1945 that the State Highway Department was given the authority to build road improvements within Missouri's cities and towns.

The Centennial Road law shifted the focus of Missouri roadbuilding from the local to the state level. It became the foundation on which the whole of Missouri's modern state highway system was established. It marked the beginning of the state highway system as we know it today. It also gave the State Highway Commission discretionary and comprehensive powers to locate, design, construct, maintain, and operate that state highway system.

The State Highway Commission

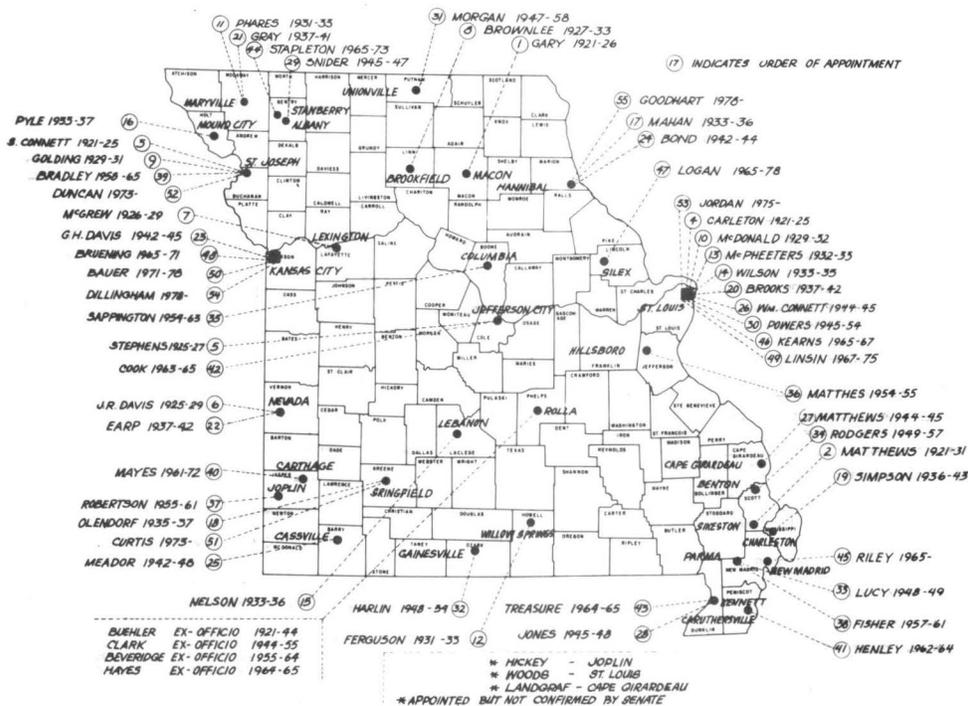
In 1965, the number of Commissioners was increased from four to the present six, but the Commission's bi-partisan character was retained. The members of the State Highway Commission are appointed to service by the Governor with the advice and consent of the State Senate. They are named to overlapping terms of six years, and no more than three of them can be members of the same political party.

Missouri State Highway Commission

- Consists of six members
- Appointed by Governor (Consent of Senate)
- Six Year Terms
- Not more than three members from same political party

The Highway Commission acts as a Board of Directors, and the State Highway Department functions as an operating agency in doing the state highway business of the people of Missouri. Down through the years State Highway Commissioners have come from many walks of life and from all geographic areas of the state. Narrow provincialism in the attitudes and actions of the Commissioners has been conspicuous by its absence. The members of the State Highway Commission have acted in the finest traditions of public service as they have established the policies and furnished the overall guidance under which the men and women of the State Highway Department have done their work.

Missouri Statistical Map Home Location of Highway Commissioners 1921 to Date



Commission and Department Responsibility

What is the size and scope of the job for which these people have the responsibility? That job consists of the operation and maintenance of a 32,000 mile system of state highways. About 7,900 of those miles constitute the Primary state highway system, of which the Interstate system is perhaps the best known part. This Primary system constitutes only about 25 percent of the entire state highway system, yet it carries nearly 70 percent of all the travel on state highways.

When it is completed in Missouri the Interstate system will contain 1,150 miles of divided multi-lane roads with access fully controlled. It will comprise about three and one half percent of the state highway system. Yet it already carries more than a third of all travel on state highways.

The largest part of the state highway system in roadway miles is the state Supplementary system. Generally speaking, Supplementary roads are those carrying relatively low volumes of traffic in the state's rural areas. They are the kinds of roads which are sometimes called "farm to market roads."

Only six states in the nation have state highway systems of greater road mileage than Missouri's. The six are North Carolina, Texas, Virginia, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and West Virginia.

Missouri State System of Highways

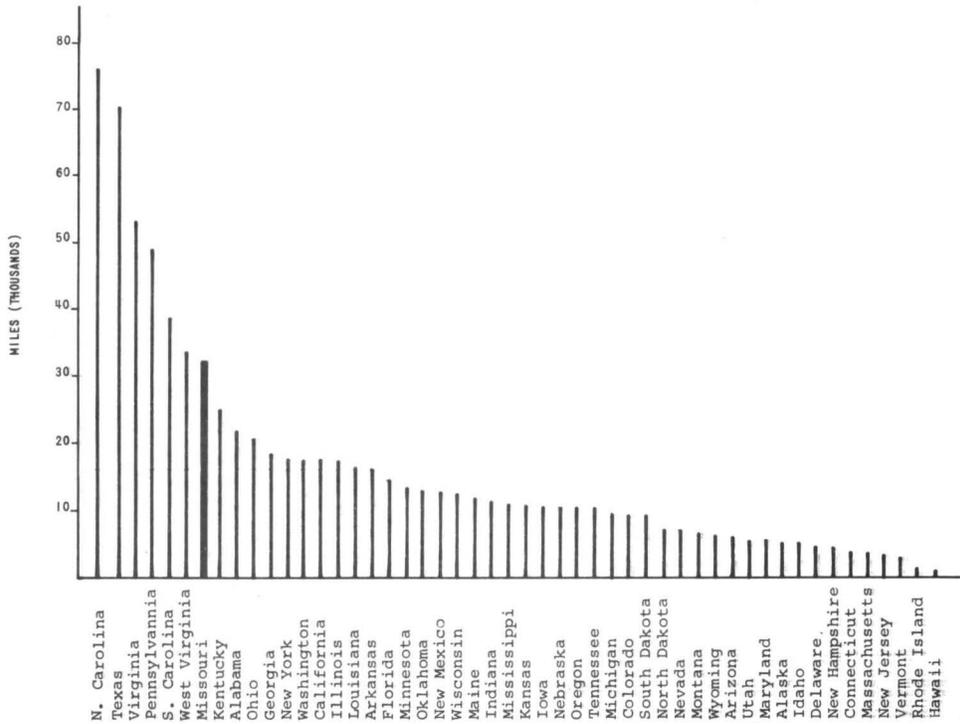
32,000 Miles _____



Missouri State System of Interstate and Primary Highways



State Administered Highways, Roads and Streets

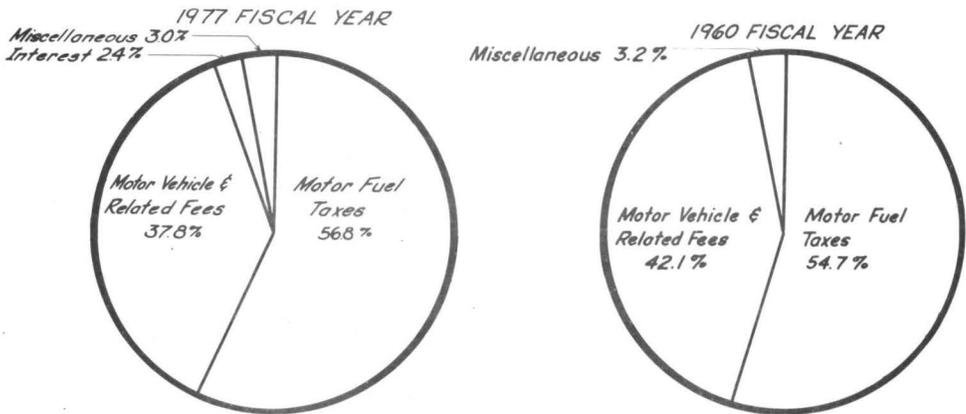


Income

In Missouri, State Highway Department activities are financed by the receipts from taxes, licenses, and fees from highway users. Under this system of funding, people who use the highways a significant amount pay a significant amount for their use; people who use the highways only a little pay only a little for their use; and people who do not use the highways at all pay nothing at all for their use.

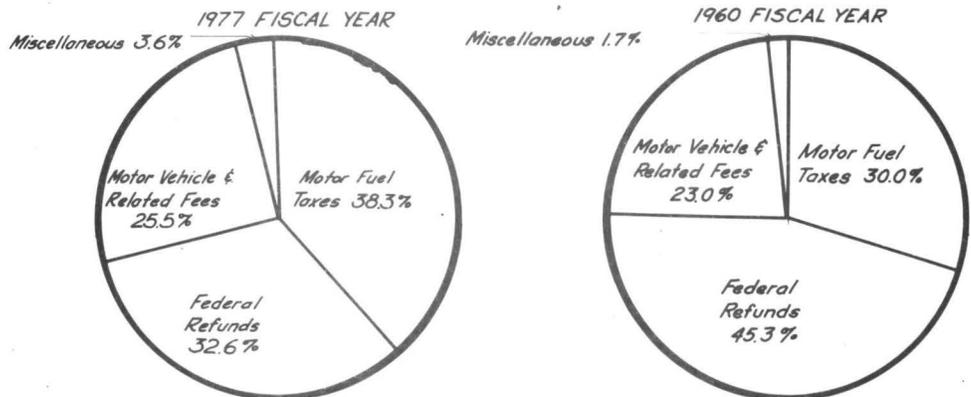
The main sources of highway revenue in the state of Missouri are motor fuel taxes, motor vehicle license fees, and federal funds. Of these the biggest is the motor fuel tax, which in fiscal year 1977 comprised about 38 percent of all highway revenues. In that same year federal funds constituted about a third of all available monies and motor vehicle license fees slightly more than a quarter of all highway revenues. Of significance here is the fact

Source of Highway Revenue (Excluding Federal Aid Reimbursement)



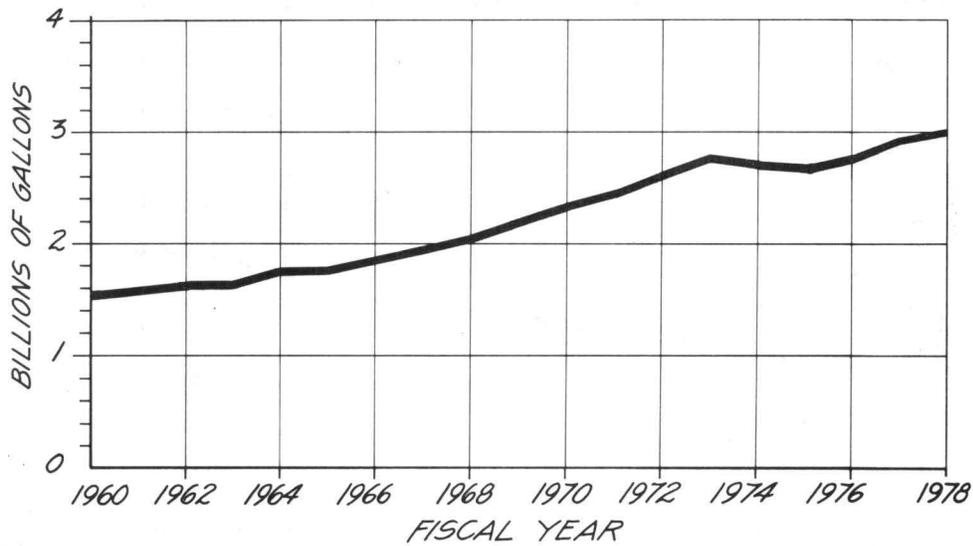
that the percentage of highway revenue in Missouri coming from federal funds is trending sharply downward. As recently as fiscal year 1960 federal funds accounted for more than 45 percent of all highway revenue in the state. Last year that percentage had shrunk to 32.6 percent.

Source of Highway Revenue (Including Federal Aid Reimbursement)



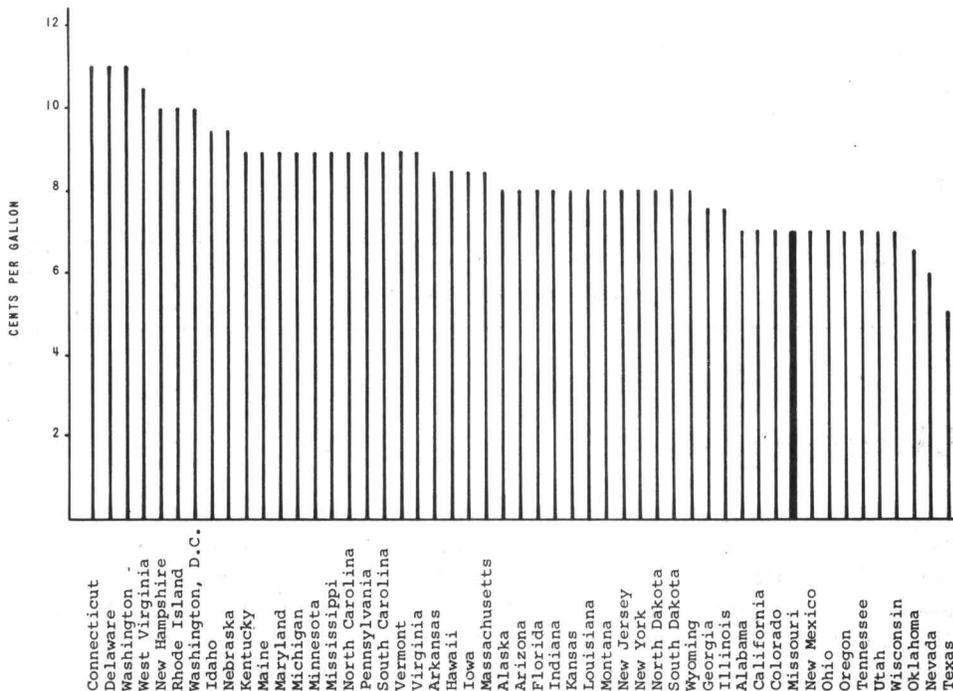
Missouri's state motor fuel tax is low. Of the fifty states, only three have motor fuel taxes lower than Missouri's. Missouri is one of ten states having a 7 cent per gallon fuel tax. Thirty-seven other states and the District of Columbia have higher motor fuel taxes than Missouri.

Motor Fuel Gallonage Taxed for Highway Use

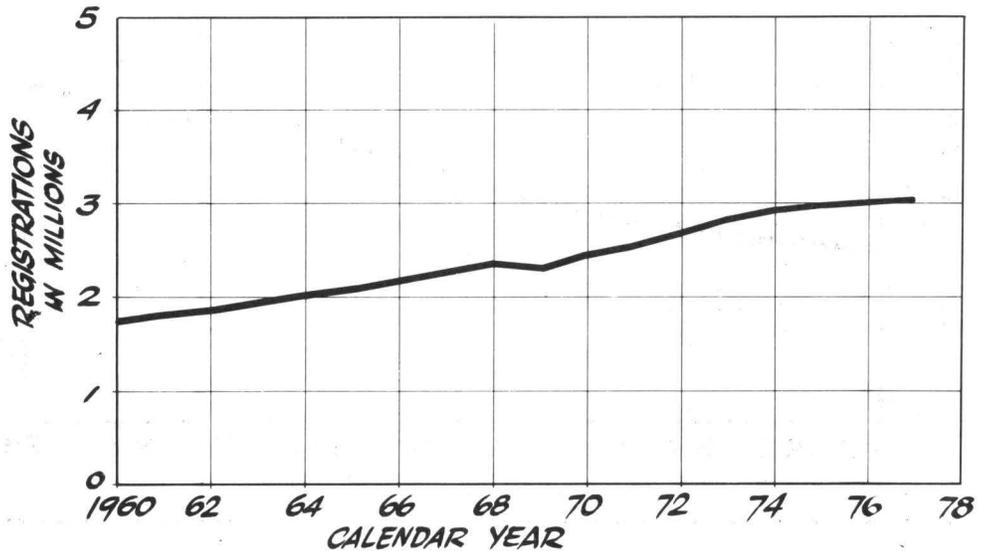


Several factors have combined since 1960 to affect the receipt of state highway monies. Motor fuel consumption taxed for highway use has increased during the period. So have motor vehicle registrations. Average passenger car license fees increased from fiscal 1960 to fiscal 1973. In 1973, the year of the fuel crisis, people began buying smaller and more fuel-efficient cars. Since 1973 the average passenger car license fee has declined.

State Gasoline Tax Rates (In Effect as of July 1, 1978)

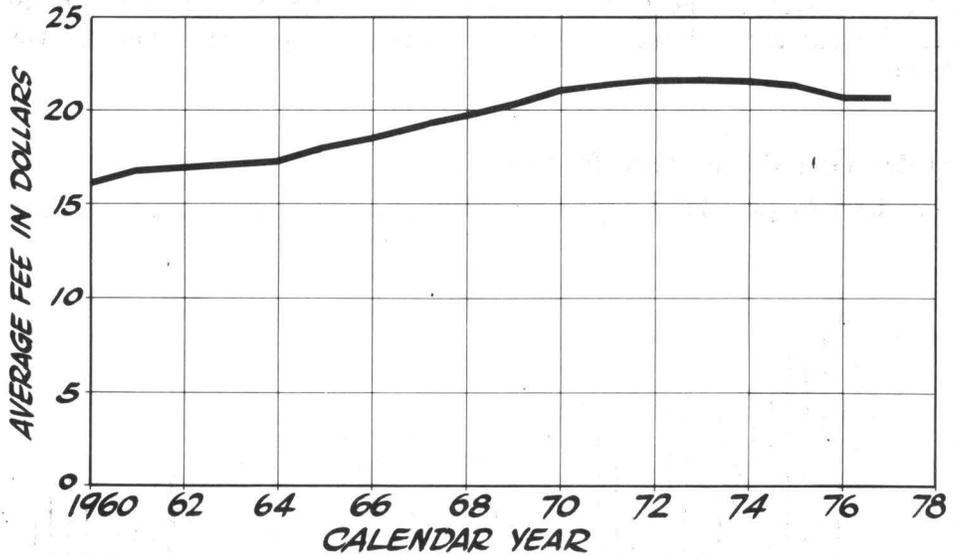


Missouri Motor Vehicle Registrations



Average Passenger Car License Fee

(BASED ON "REPORT OF MOTOR VEHICLE REGISTRATION SALES" OF THE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE)

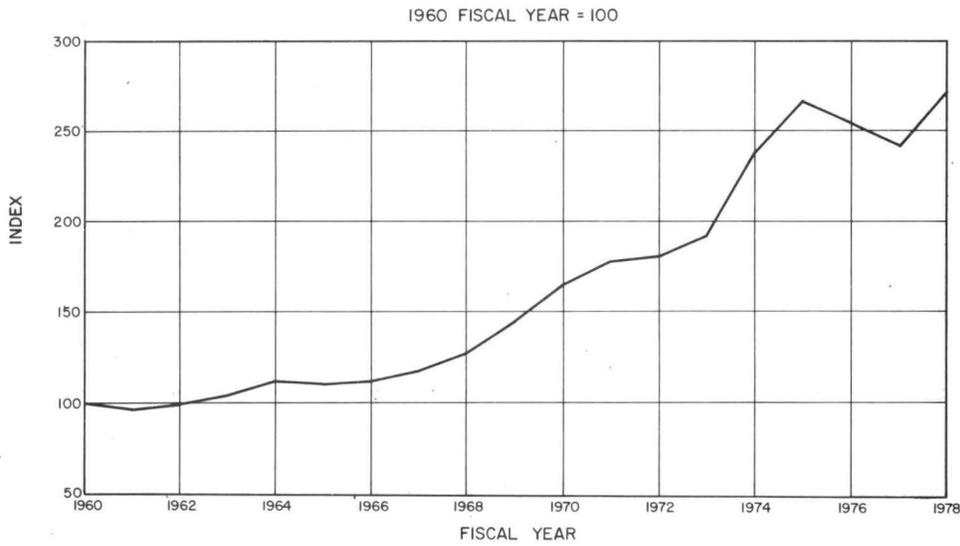


Disbursements

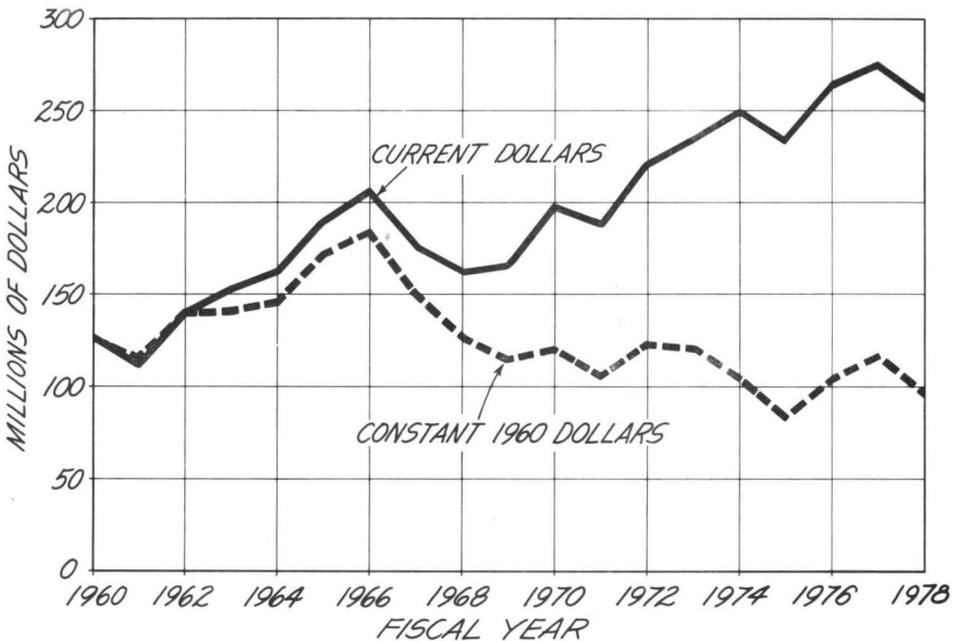
The State Highway Department now is able to accomplish far less than was the case as recently as 1960. The principal cause of this unhappy fact is the Department's diminished purchasing power resulting from the ravages of inflation. Almost every single item of material and labor involved in highway work has been adversely impacted by the inflation which has infected the general economy. In addition, improved standards for highway design and greatly complicated procedures—many of them imposed on the

Department by the Federal Government—have added significantly to the cost of the finished highway product. So have environmental considerations and concerns—many of them extremely expensive to mitigate. These factors have combined to create a situation in which the State Highway Department, in dollars of 1960 value, has far less purchasing power now than it did then—and can build only about one-fourth of the miles of highway improvements per dollar spent that it could build then.

Missouri Highway Construction Cost Index

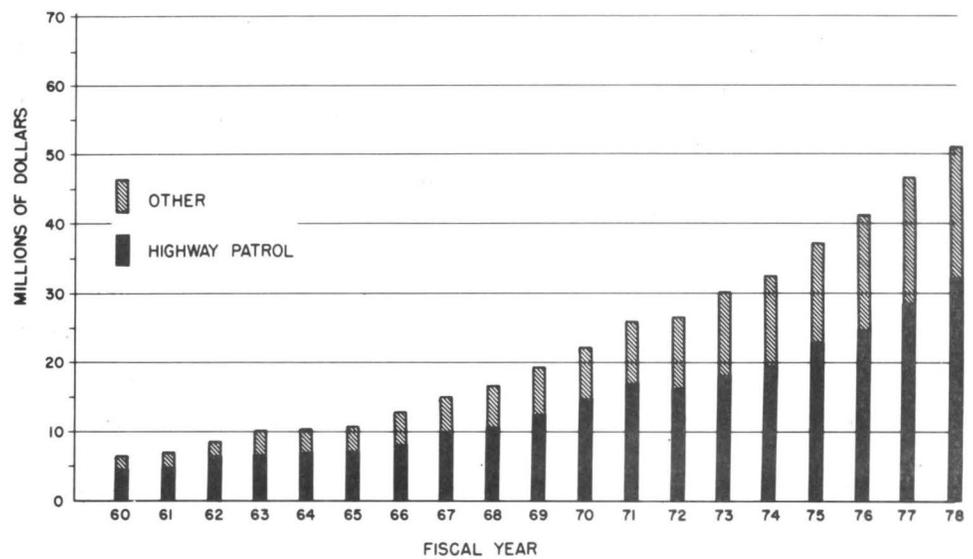


Funds Available for Construction



Another factor adversely impacting State Highway Department money available for disbursement has been the channelling of steadily increasing amounts of highway funds into other agencies of state government. In 1960, a total of about 7 1/2 million dollars of highway funds was utilized by other state agencies. In 1978, the total so used was in excess of 50 million dollars. The Missouri State Highway Patrol has been the chief beneficiary of the increased use of State Highway money. But the Department of Revenue, the State Auditor's Office, the Office of Administration, and several other agencies of state government also have received significant amounts of highway money.

Expenditure of Highway Funds by Other State Departments



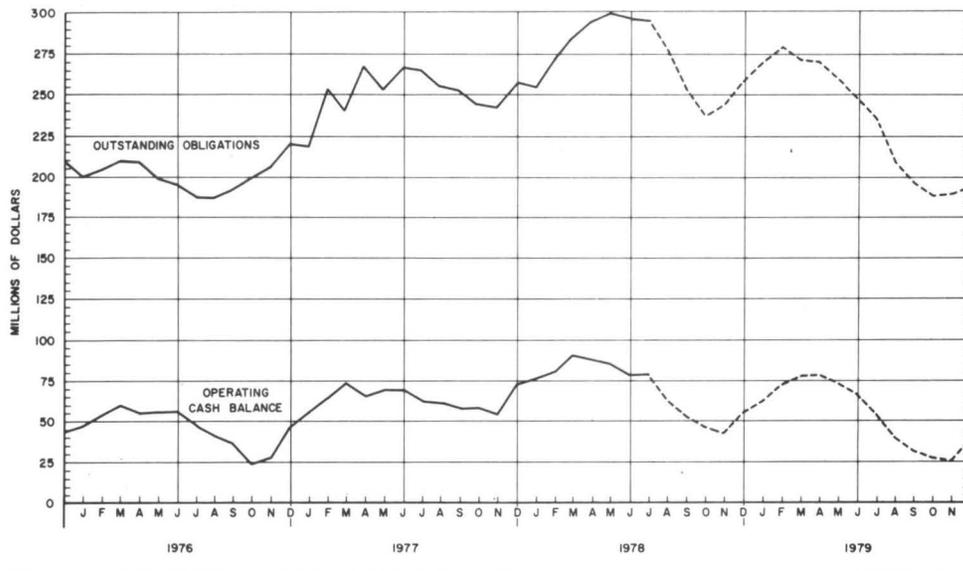
Cash Flow

The State Road Fund is the account into which income for highway purposes is deposited and from which funds for highway expenditures are withdrawn. The yearly income-expenditure cycle is such that expenditures are not made concurrent with income. Income usually is greatest in the months of January, February, and March. Relatively little construction is possible during the winter months, hence relatively few demands are made on the fund.

On the other hand, low points in the operating balance of the State Road Fund generally occur in the late Fall. The months from April through October are usually months of very high construction activity and as such, months in which expenditures from the fund exceed income to it. The balances in the fund, therefore, decrease through the construction season to low points in November or December.

Many factors extraneous to the road building process combine to cause variances from this general pattern. Labor disputes or the lack of them, for example; and the availability of the materials necessary for construction

Outstanding Construction Obligations and Operating Cash Balance



or a lack of it; and—perhaps most important of all—the weather, and whether or not it permits construction to proceed. Missouri's statutes permits the State Highway Commission to obligate money in anticipation of revenue so at any point in time outstanding obligations are considerably in excess of actual available funds.

Needs

In 1970 the Federal Department of Transportation directed that a National Transportation Study be made. The study was to be made by each of the 50 states, and the criteria governing it were to be established at the federal level. Reports were to be furnished to the Congress on a biennial basis, and the reports were to encompass total transportation needs for a 20 year period in all modes of transportation—highways, rail, air, and water. In Missouri the people of the State Highway Department examined highway needs and, using the standards which had been developed at the federal level, made estimates concerning what it would take to bring Missouri's state highway system to the levels of adequacy indicated for that 20 year period.

The study which went to the Congress in 1972 showed that for the next 20 years, 80 to 85 percent of the total transportation needs were going to occur on the nation's roads, streets, and highways. The State Highway Department examined the 1972 report and found that about 80 percent of the deficiencies needed to be met within 10 rather than 20 years. The fixed 1971 costs included in the original report were adjusted to current dollar values, and it was found that to meet the needs identified in a ten year period would have called for a ten year expenditure on the state highway system of 16.7 billion dollars, or 1.67 billion dollars a year. There was no realistic hope that the people of Missouri would provide finances for a program of that magnitude.

1974 NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION STUDY

•Purpose

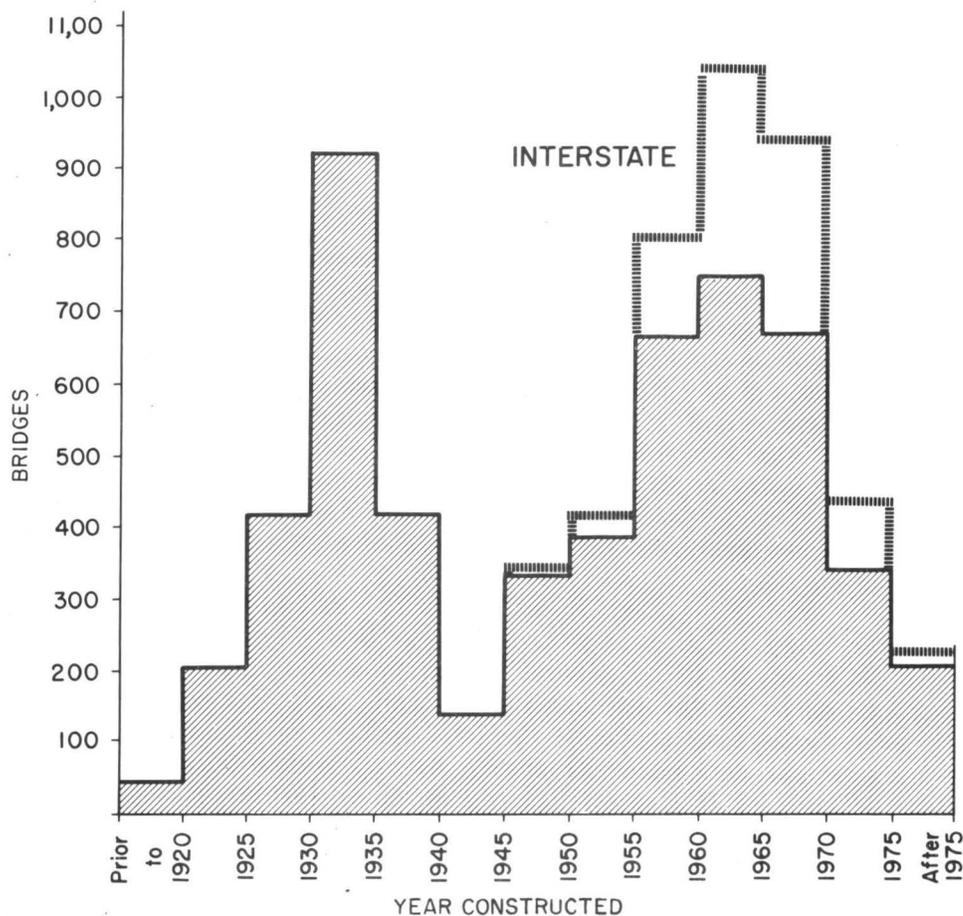
Determine present and future adequacy of transportation system

Quantify transportation needs in dollars through set of consistent nationwide measures

- 79.7% of highway needs in first ten years
- Needs based on constant 1971 dollars
- 10 year highway needs - \$16,721,020,000

Since needs were greatly in excess of resources available or envisioned, the task became one of identifying the most pressing needs the report had uncovered, and meeting those needs with the available resources. The first category examined was that of bridges.

Year Span Type Bridges Constructed



Bridges

The condition of the bridges on the Missouri State Highway System is a reflection of the fact that much of that system was built almost half a century ago. More than 1,900 span type bridges of the approximately 9,000 on the Missouri State Highway System are more than 40 years old. In most cases, these old bridges were not designed to carry the loads they routinely are carrying today.

Originally the State Highway Department arrayed the aging bridges into ten categories to establish priorities for improvement. Because of the great amount of money needed to finance the necessary improvements, the top four categories were the only ones considered for immediate action.

Priority I bridges were those needing attention on what might be called the priority highway system—the most important segments of the state's Primary highway system, including the Interstate system. That highway system is similar to the one envisioned in the Intercity-Interregional highway plan. The deficient bridges on that system are fairly evenly distributed throughout the state. There are 155 of them which should have major repair or replacement during the next ten year period.

Bridge Deficiencies-Priority I



Priority II bridges include those bridges on the remainder of the Primary system and those on the Supplementary or farm-to-market system which have posted load limits. There are 125 of these, and again they are scattered pretty well throughout the state. Most of them need replacing and the remaining few require major repairs.

Bridge Deficiencies-Priority II

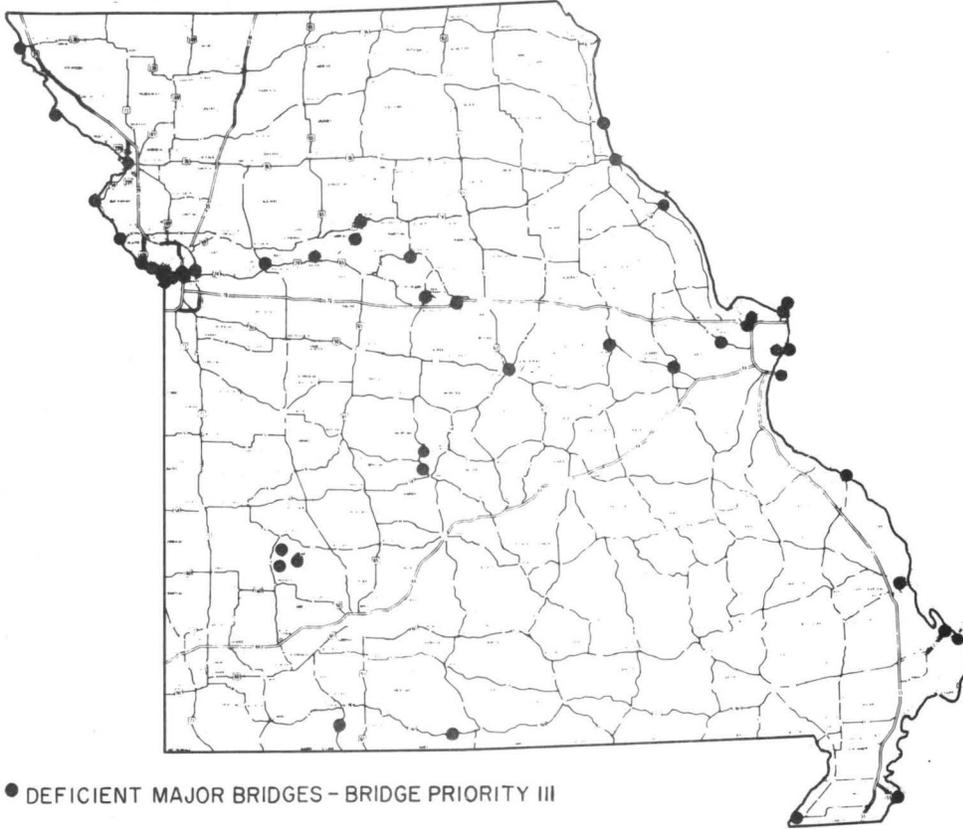


Priority III bridges include bridges over the major streams in the state. These are bridges more than 1,500 feet in length. There are 49 such bridges on the state highway system and 12 of them require major repair or replacement within the ten year period in question. They include the bridge across the Grand Glaize Arm of the Lake of the Ozarks, the ASB bridge in Kansas City, the Pony Express Bridge at St. Joseph, and bridges in St. Louis and other areas of the State.

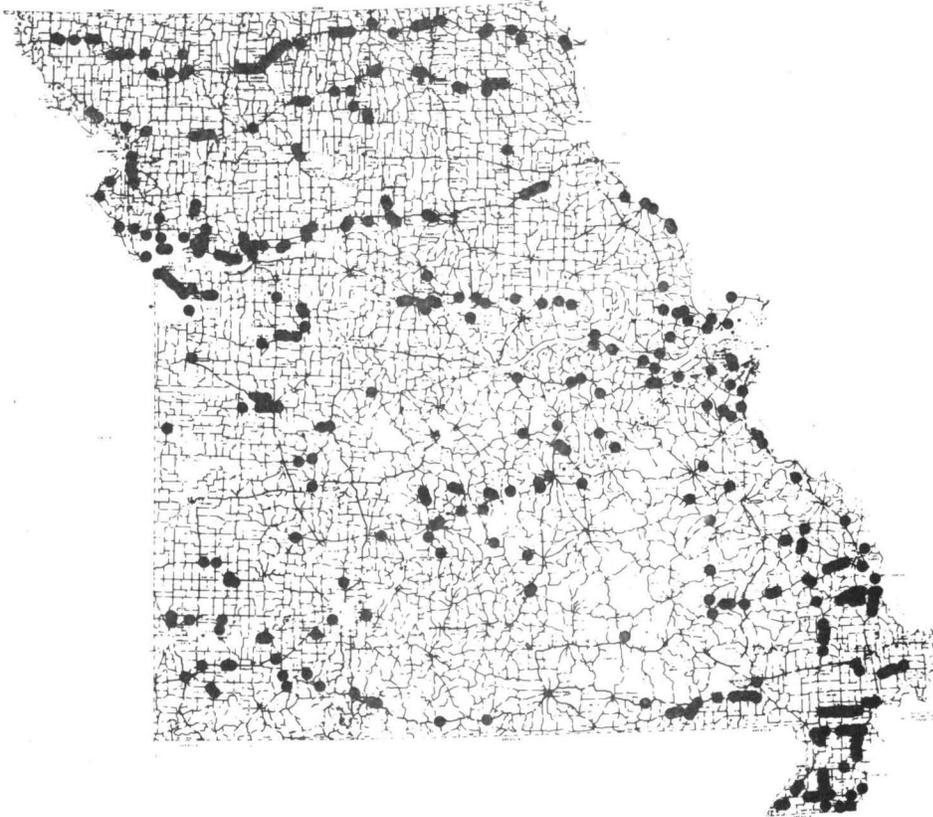
Priority IV bridges are those on the Primary and Secondary systems carrying 1,000 vehicles a day and indicating structural deficiencies. There are 436 of these bridges.

The four priorities described above encompass approximately 700 bridges on the state highway system most urgently in need of immediate attention. Of that total of 700 bridges, 388 already have been programmed for improvement. But to provide improvements for the remaining deficient bridges on the state highway system is going to require additional money—and a lot of it.

**Major Bridges 1,500 Feet and Longer
Over Major Streams and Lakes**



Bridge Deficiencies - Priority IV



Capacity Deficiencies

In addition to its numerous bridges which need upgrading, portions of the Missouri State Highway System presently suffer from significant capacity problems. These problems are attacked in this way: on those sections of the state highway system carrying 3,000 cars per day or less, improvements are considered only when the roads are operating right now at 200 percent capacity or something greater than that. On those sections of the state highway system carrying between 3,000 and 5,000 cars per day, improvements are considered on stretches of the road presently operating in excess of 180 percent of capacity. On those sections of the road carrying 5,000 cars per day or more, those most heavily traveled sections of the state highway system, improvements are considered on stretches now operating at 100 percent of capacity or more. This, then, identifies those sections of the system which most urgently require immediate improvement to improve capacity and reduce congestion. Some of these sections are scheduled for improvement in the current right-of-way and construction program.

Capacity Improvements

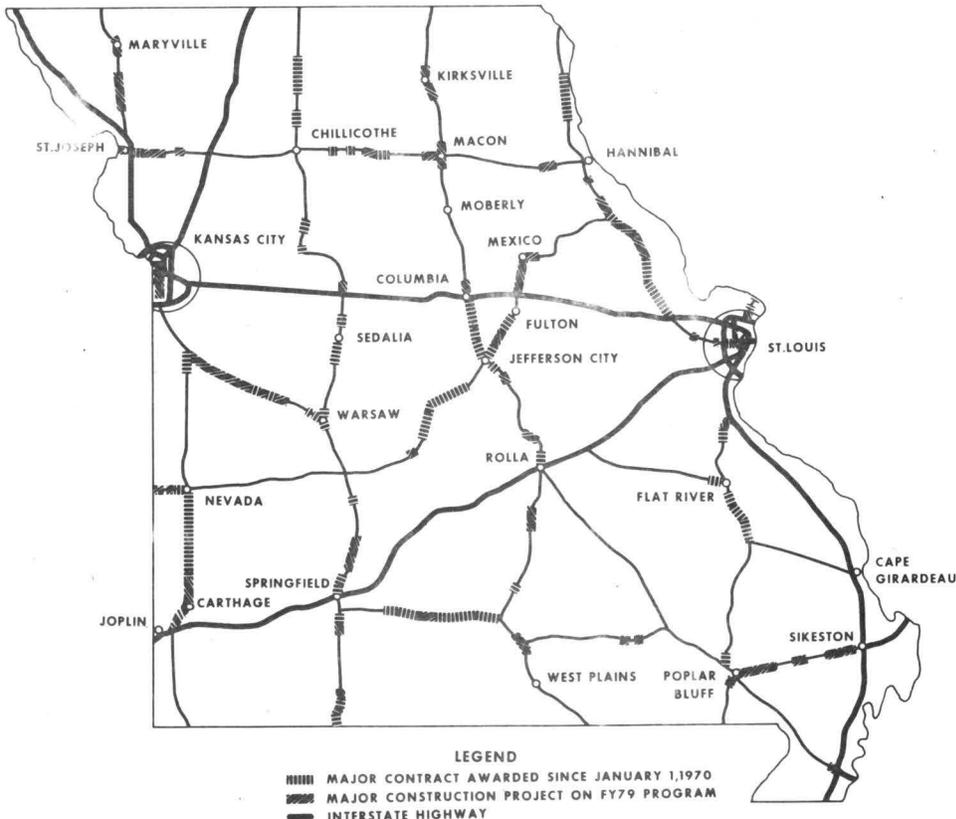


Funding Shortfall

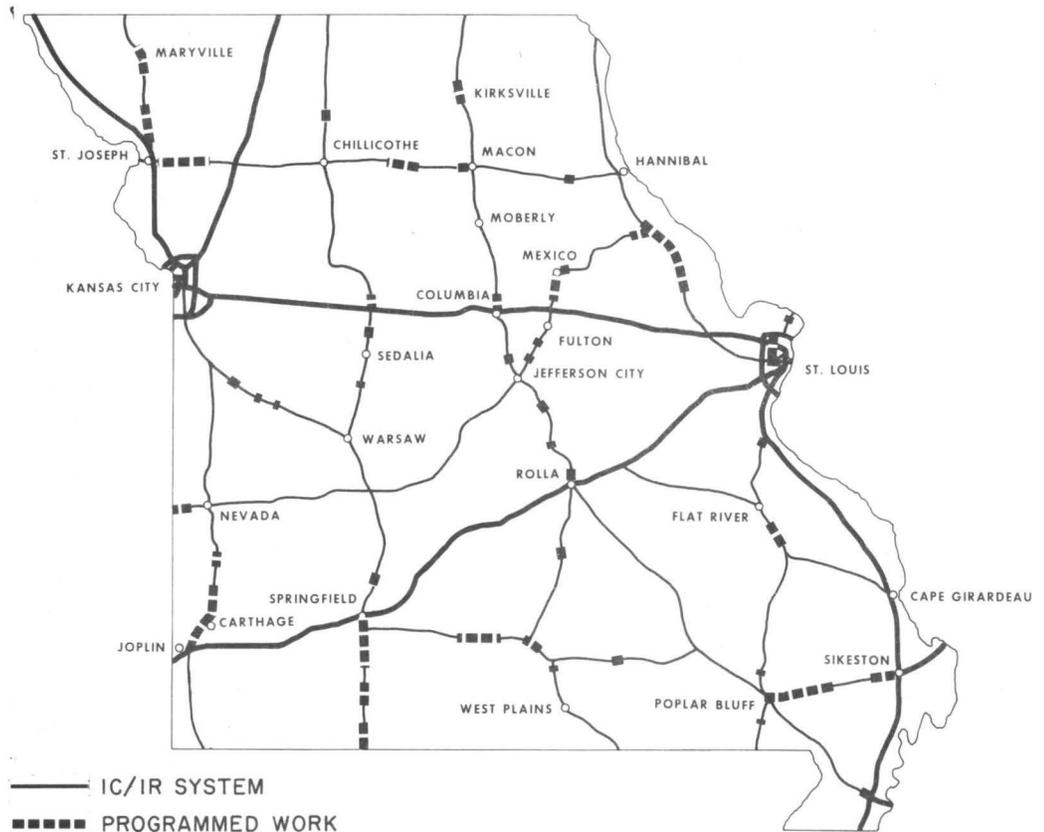
Estimates have been made in an attempt to find out how much money is needed just to take care of the most basic needs of the kind which have been enumerated here. The figure is of the order of 340 million dollars annually for the next ten years. When that figure is compared with the approximately 200 million annually which now is available for construction, a 140 million dollar per year shortfall appears. (This estimate is based on inflation trends apparent in 1975 and 1976. Current inflation rates are higher and consequently estimates based on current trends will be higher.) To successfully overcome that shortfall would require a doubling of the state motor fuel tax, and of course any such increase as that is completely unrealistic. Nevertheless that is the need, and one of the obligations of the State Highway Department is to make that need known to responsible Missourians in all walks of life.

The accompanying illustration shows the proposed Intercity-Interregional highway system—a supplemental freeway system designed to extend beyond the Interstate and to serve the most important population centers of the state—the system which would carry the heaviest volume of traffic. It was laid out, and in 1969 a bond issue was considered as a means of accelerating work on it. The bond issue did not materialize,

State Inter-City and Inter-Regional Highway System



Comparison-IC/IR System and Programmed Work



but the State Highway Department did receive an increase in its motor fuel tax in 1972. The illustration shows the progress which is being made on the IC/IR system—work which is underway or programmed on various segments. And, of course, some of it has already been built. For instance, the section of Route 71 from Kansas City to Nevada has been completed, as have some sections on Route 61 in Northeast Missouri.

Both the St. Louis and the Kansas City metropolitan areas have pressing highway needs. These are being attacked on a priority basis as funds allow.

Developing Priorities

Given the needs which exist on the state highway system in all areas of Missouri, how are recommendations for improvements developed for submission to the State Highway Commission for its consideration in setting priorities? One tool used is the service rating, a technique for continuously examining the system and continuously rating it as to structural adequacy, operating efficiency (which involves capacity problems and congestion), and safety. The system is rated statewide, and those sections of it exhibiting the greatest inadequacies are selected and programmed for improvement. The service rating is not the only method used to determine what sections of the state highway system most need to be improved. Highway Department people work closely with local governmental authorities, private citizens, and developers throughout the state as highway plans are being made; and if something is being developed which obviously is going to be a major traffic generator, consideration is given to the consequences of its development. An example of one such development is the Chrysler Plant

in Fenton, in South St. Louis County. When the Chrysler Plant was built in that location, it went into what had been an open field, and the State Highway Department spent several million dollars in modifying the highway system to better handle traffic to and from the Chrysler Plant. Similarly, the Western Electric Plant caused some adjustments in priorities when it was built several years ago at Lees Summit in metropolitan Kansas City. And certainly Kansas City International Airport changed highway department priorities in the Kansas City metropolitan area because facilities simply had to be provided to handle the traffic to and from that major traffic generator. The various Regional Planning Commissions have their opportunities for input regarding priorities also.

Improvement Program

The sections of the state highway system thus programmed for improvement are balanced against the Highway Department's continuing forecasts of incoming revenue. Out of that balance comes the right-of-way and construction program. The program is reviewed and approved by the State Highway Commission in the early part of each calendar year.

There has been concern within Missouri and nationwide for some time now, that because of the many federal procedural requirements involved in road building, it is almost impossible to bring a highway project of any size from concept to contract in five years. Seven or eight years is a much more realistic time frame if the project involved is of a major nature. There are public hearings, there are environmental impact statements, there are air quality requirements, there are water quality requirements, there are historical, scenic, and archaeological impacts which have to be dealt with—and all of this takes time.

Because of these concerns the Highway Department now is in the process of modifying the structure and length of its right-of-way and construction program. The newly structured program will list projects and their anticipated costs for the first year, a second year's worth of standby projects, and five additional years of work for which money is anticipated. Should a project in the first year fall by the wayside, one of the standby projects can be moved into the first year to replace it. Some overprogramming will be done to compensate for those situations in which projects cannot be implemented. An example of that sort of situation can be found in St. Louis County, where the Highway Commission abandoned a project planned at Mason Road and Highway 40 in the face of strong opposition voiced at a public hearing.

Once the program is approved by the Highway Commission, the Department proceeds with a pre-location study meeting, at which suggestions are invited from interested citizens. After that meeting, the Highway Department proceeds with alternative location studies. Several locations may be studied, and the results of these studies are presented to the public at another meeting—this one called the location public hearing. If the project is relatively minor—the widening of a stretch of road, for example—the Department will hold a combined location and design public hearing. Public reactions to the various locations are evaluated. This information is then used by the Department and Commission in determining the best alternate for the improvement.

With a location established, the Highway Department proceeds with design on that location. When the design has been brought to a certain stage of development, a design public hearing is held. That meeting, which

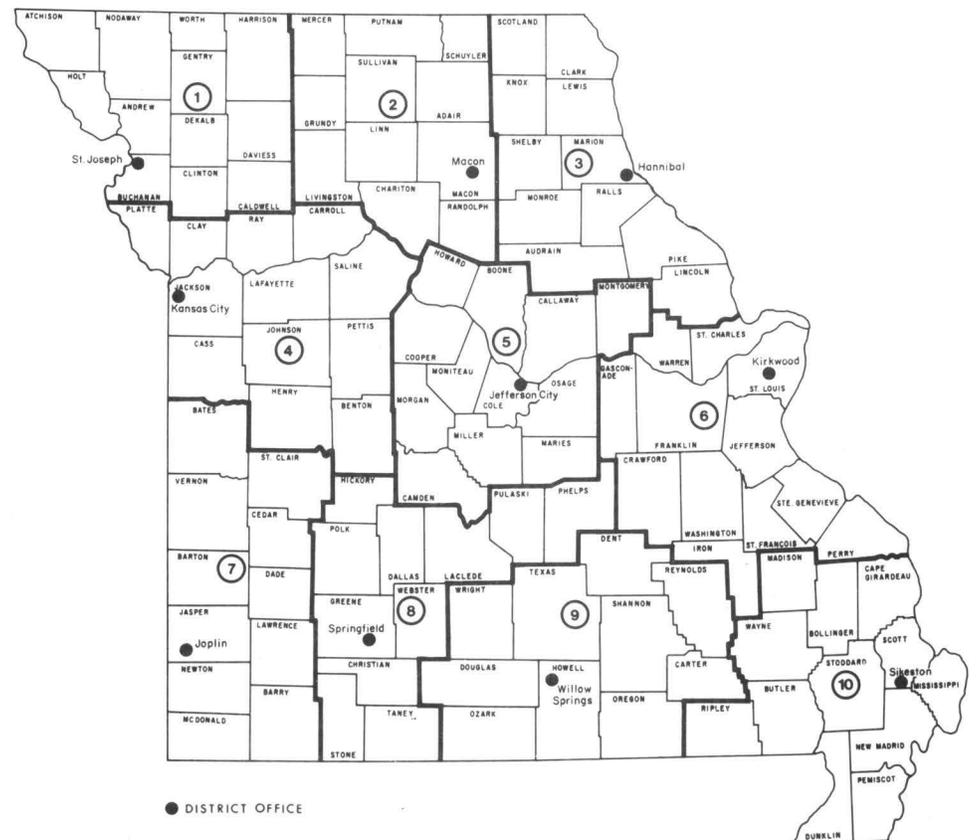
is open to all interested citizens, serves the basic purpose of getting public comments on the design. But on any project of significance, the Department holds a location hearing first, considers the comments made, and then holds a design hearing. Sometimes the comments of the people at public hearings result in the Highway Department selecting an alternative to the one it first selected; sometimes several changes are made as a result of the discussions held at these hearings. But eventually the Highway Department will arrive at a consensus recommendation or make modifications in its first recommendation and take that recommendation to the Commission for its consideration and approval.

So there is a great deal of public input at these hearings. The hearings are open. The details of the Highway Department's right-of-way and construction program are open, too, and any citizen interested in learning how that program will affect his day to day life or his entrepreneurial interests has easy access to the program at the Headquarters Office in Jefferson City at Highway Department District Offices.

Organizational Structure

The State Highway Department operates as a decentralized organization. Staff assistance and functional control for the various departmental tasks are provided by the Headquarters Office to the ten geographic districts of the Department. Each District contains about 12 counties and about ten percent of the total road mileage in the state highway system. Each of the districts is under the direction of a District Engineer, who is responsible for administering all activities in his District.

Missouri State Highway Department Districts



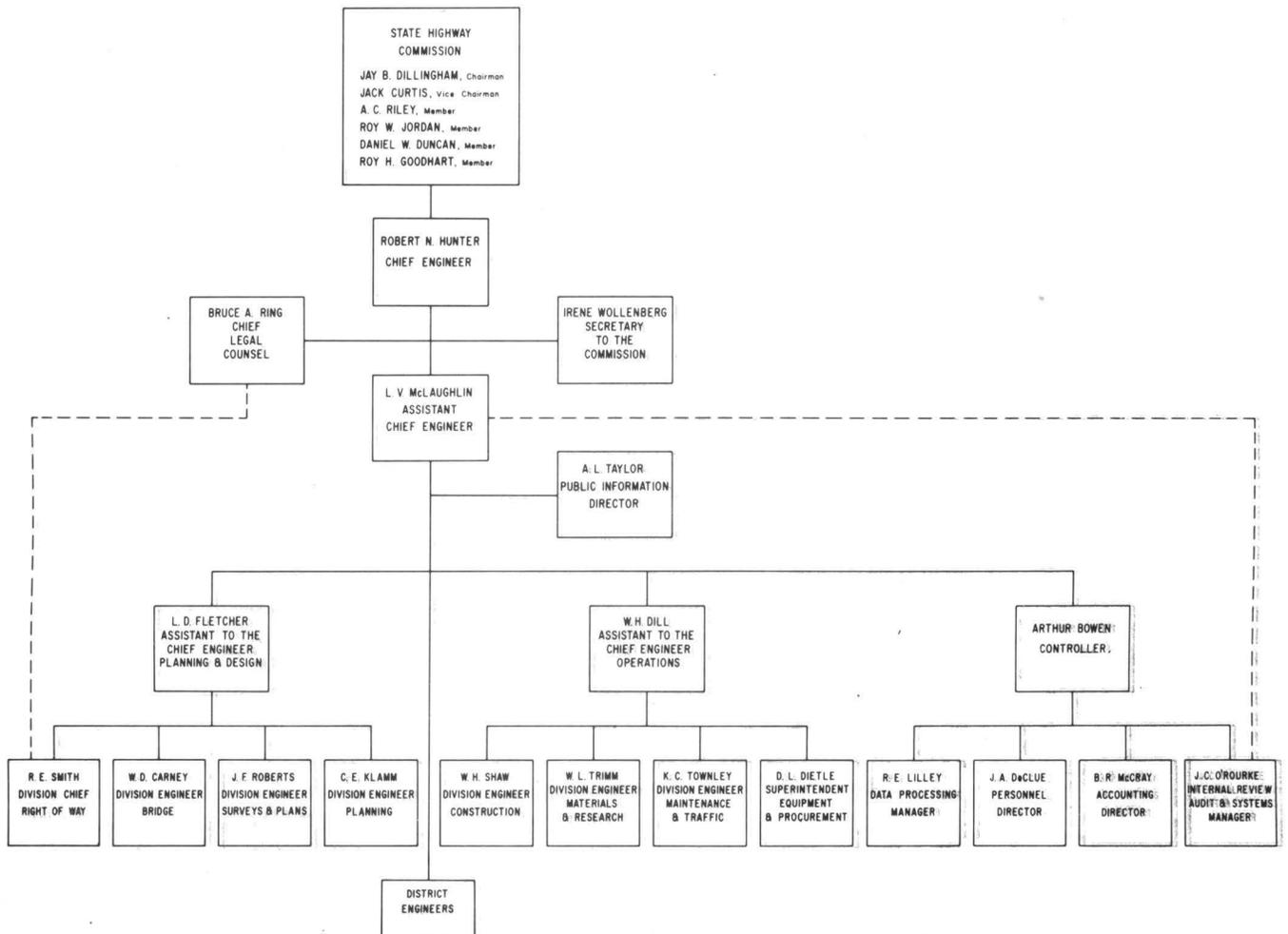
Bridge design and the highway planning functions are handled by divisions in the Headquarters Office in Jefferson City which do not have counterparts in the Districts. But in the main, decisions about highway construction, maintenance, and operations are made at the district level, in accordance with procedures and standards established by the State Highway Department.

The State Highway Department has district headquarters offices located at St. Joseph, Macon, Hannibal, Kansas City, Jefferson City, Kirkwood, Joplin, Springfield, Willow Springs, and Sikeston.

The Department's Planning Division is responsible for working with the Districts and with various other divisions in the Headquarters Office in Jefferson City on the development of the planning and construction program. In addition, the planning division does continuing traffic studies, origin and destination studies, and a variety of liaison tasks with other branches of government at both the state and the local levels.

As previously indicated the responsibility for bridge design is centralized in the headquarters office. The major portion of the bridge design task is accomplished with staff personnel, however, when it is deemed necessary or desirable consultants are employed.

Missouri State Highway Department



The responsibility for seeing that plans for highway projects move along on schedule to the ultimate award of contract belongs to the Department's Surveys and Plans Division. That division makes reconnaissance studies, and works with the various districts on matters of design—primarily attempting to insure that proposed designs are in keeping with the Department's established procedures and standards. The Surveys and Plans Division also develops the Department's environmental impact statements, relying as necessary on expertise from outside the Department—the University of Missouri, the Conservation Department, and others. When all necessary design work is completed and the right-of-way is secured, the division advertises for competitive bids from qualified contractors. Lettings are held eleven times each year, and the bids received are opened and read in public.

Missouri exhibits wide varieties of topography, soil composition, and other physical characteristics bearing on highway construction. To test these varying conditions as they occur within a project, to make recommendations concerning the appropriate materials for use on a project, and to control the quality of materials chosen are some of the functions of the Materials and Research Division of the Department.

When the construction limits of a highway project have been set and it has been determined what land will be needed, the work of securing the necessary land goes to the Highway Department's Right-of-Way Division. There is a division office in Jefferson City and there are right-of-way staffs in all ten districts. Right-of-way people examine the properties required for highway construction and make appraisals or hire them made on a contract basis. These determine what the Department considers fair prices for damages to the properties. Negotiators then contact the property owners involved and tender them offers based on the appraisals. If the property owners agree, the properties involved are conveyed to the Highway Department and the matter ends there. Otherwise, the Department exercises the right of eminent domain, and the courts ultimately decide just compensation. About seventy-five percent of the property which the Highway Department acquires is secured through the negotiation process.

If property must be condemned, the matter is turned over to the Highway Department's Legal Division, whose attorneys, both in the Jefferson City office and in the Districts, carry out condemnation proceedings and acquire the right-of-way so that construction can proceed.

The Construction Division's responsibility starts when the lowest responsible bidder on a highway project has been determined and the State Highway Commission approves the award of the project to that bidder. The Construction Division is responsible for seeing that the project is completed in keeping with the terms of the contract.

Once a highway project has been constructed and is opened to traffic, its maintenance and the movement of traffic over it become the responsibility of the Maintenance and Traffic Division. Involved in the discharge of that responsibility are such diverse activities as the mowing of rights of way in summer, the removal of snow and ice in the winter, patching of roadway surfaces as required, periodic striping of highways, and the maintenance of signs, signals, and lights.

The work of the engineering divisions of the Highway Department whose tasks have been outlined above is aided by the Department's ancillary divisions—public information, personnel, equipment and procurement, and accounting.

Transportation's Future: Who Decides?

In a free society, ultimately it is the people who determine what levels and kinds of governmental services will be available to them. This truism applies to the State Highway Department as well as to any other agency of government. As duly elected representatives of the people, the members of the General Assembly have the power to shape Missouri's transportation destiny during the remainder of this century, and beyond.

