



TH 15 Corridor Coalition Chronicle

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Congressman Oberstar Voices Support for TH 15 at Coalition Dinner

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Congressman Oberstar
Voices Support for TH 15 at
Coalition Dinner
- 2 TH 15 Coalition Has Busy
2006; Preparing for
Productive 2007
- 3 Steering Committee
Updates Coalition Dues
Structure

Congressman James Oberstar, who is in line to become the Chairman the U.S. House of Representatives Transportation and Infrastructure Committee when Congress reconvenes in January, was recently the guest of the TH 15 Corridor Coalition Steering Committee at a dinner event on November 1. Congressman Oberstar took time out of his busy campaign just a week before the general election in order to meet with Coalition members and to discuss the challenges and opportunities involving the future of the Corridor.

The meeting was organized by McLeod County Engineer John Brunkhorst and Dale Grove from the Coalition's consulting partner Bonestroo Rosene, Anderlik & Associates. Fred Corrigan of Bonestroo and a long time friend of Congressman Oberstar, chaired the event and opened the discussion of the meeting with an explanation of the history of the TH 15 Corridor Coalition, its organizational structure, and its immediate and long range goals for the future of communities all along the corridor.



Congressman Jim Oberstar meeting with TH 15 Steering Committee members on November 1.

Congressman Oberstar was clearly impressed with the group's commitment and enthusiasm and encouraged the leadership of the Coalition to "continue to push for safety and access management along the entire 130 miles corridor." Congressman Oberstar also remarked that "the TH Corridor Coalition is exactly the type of group that can make a convincing case for federal transportation funding."

Among those attending from the TH 15 Corridor Coalition were Stearns County Commissioner DeWayne Mareck, Central Minnesota Transportation Alliance chair Bill Fahrney, McLeod County Engineer John Brunkhorst, Hutchinson City Engineer Kent Exner, MnDOT Assistant District Engineer Jim Povich, Hutchinson Economic Development Authority Chairman Miles Sepselt, and Keith Markwardt of the Kimball State Bank.

Afterwards, TH 15 Coalition members all agreed that the event was a great success. According to one participant, "It was a home run for TH 15...we could not have invested funds better for the cause. We need to continue the effort to get more elected officials and business owners on board, and to educate them on the needs and potential solutions along the corridor."

*"The TH 15 Corridor Coalition is exactly the type of group that can make a convincing case for federal transportation funding."
Congressman Jim Oberstar*

TH 15 Corridor Coalition has busy 2006; Preparing for Productive 2007

While there remains a great deal more work to do, the TH 15 Corridor Coalition has achieved much in the last year. Among the highlights:

- ✓ The Coalition commissioned a TH 15 Corridor Action Plan prepared by Bonestroo & Associates in February that makes recommendations on organizational structure, operational processes, membership, promotional activities and funding issues.
- ✓ The Coalition conducted meetings with Chambers of Commerce along the TH 15 Corridor in an effort to continue to build awareness of the needs along the Corridor.
- ✓ The Coalition Steering Committee held regular meetings to review progress and make specific plans for further developing the organization.
- ✓ The Coalition revised and updated the TH 15 Corridor Coalition dues structure. (See article page 3.)
- ✓ The Coalition enlisted the assistance of the Hutchinson Economic Development Authority to coordinate certain Hwy 15 Coalition activities.
- ✓ The Coalition met with Minnesota's congressional delegation in Washington D.C. and also locally to request needed funds for planning and right-of-way acquisition along the Corridor.
- ✓ The Coalition hosted a dinner with Congressman and House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman-designate Jim Oberstar. (See article page 1.)
- ✓ The Coalition finalized an agreement with Bonstroo & Associates to provide staff support, prepare informational materials, develop a Capital Needs Plan and host a presentation for Hwy 15 Corridor legislators.

The Coalition intends to ride this momentum to make significant progress in 2007. Next on the agenda: a meeting with members of Congress and state legislators to brief them on critical issues and request their support in the coming year.

The Coalition intends to ride this momentum to make significant progress in 2007. Next on the agenda: the Coalition is organizing a meeting for December 12, 2006 with members of Congress and state legislators whose districts include Hwy 15 to brief them on the critical issues involving the corridor and request their support in the coming year.

Steering Committee Updates Coalition Dues Structure

One of the key recommendations from the TH 15 Corridor Coalition Action Plan prepared earlier this year was a re-examination of the dues structure of the organization. Recognizing that it is essential for the organization to be diverse and represent of all the interests and groups along the corridor, the Coalition identified the need early on to establish a revenue structure that would attract a variety of member groups while also providing a revenue stream adequate to meet the ongoing costs of an effective organization.

The table at right shows the dues structure as determined by the TH 15 Corridor Coalition Steering Committee. In addition, we may want to mention that the “Hwy 15 Coalition Development Fund” contributions are in addition to regular dues. These are funds that will help jump-start Coalition activities and we are asking all members to seriously consider making a contribution to this fund. This dues structure will be discussed at the next membership meeting in February, 2007.

<u>Hwy 15 Coalition Dues Structure</u>			
<u>Annual Dues</u>		<u>Hwy 15 Coalition Development Fund</u>	
County	\$200	Endowment	\$5,000
City	\$200	Sustaining	\$2,500
Township	\$50	Supporting	\$1,000
Business	\$50		
Organization	\$50		
Association	\$100		
Individual	\$25		

Membership News

There is great reason for optimism as the TH 15 Corridor Coalition begins the new year. The Coalition is poised to achieve the goals it has established for the future of the TH 15 Corridor.

Increasing membership is important not only to provide the resources necessary to operate the organization, but also to strengthen the Coalition through diversity and sheer numbers. If you know of an organization or an individual who may have an interest in joining the Coalition, the membership form below can be filled out and mailed or faxed to the TH 15 Corridor Coalition.

The next membership meeting will take place in February. A final announcement of the time and place is forthcoming.

Jurisdiction/Business/Organization Name:		
Representative(s):		
Mailing Address:		
City:	State:	Zip Code:
Telephone:	Fax:	
E-Mail:		



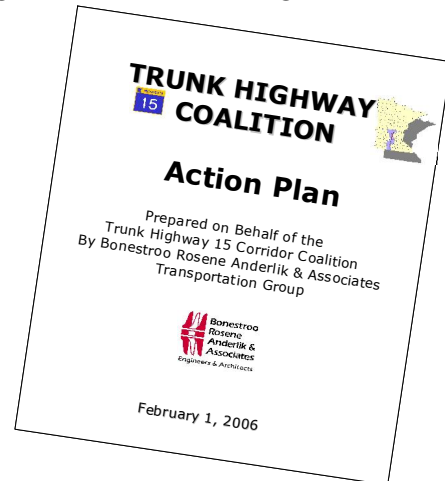
About the Trunk Highway 15 Corridor

The Minnesota Trunk Highway 15 (TH 15) corridor is classified as a principal arterial and a regional corridor that extends about 130 miles from US 10 and Interstate 94 (Sauk Rapids) on the north end to Interstate 90 (Fairmont) on the south end. The corridor serves the regional centers of St. Cloud, Hutchinson, New Ulm, and Fairmont and is critical to the economic development and sustained growth in all of south-central Minnesota. The TH 15 corridor is a major transportation route used each day by thousands of local commuters, regional shippers and tourists.

Traffic growth along some segments of the corridor has increased by 70%, and with overall volumes increasing over 50%. These trends will all most certainly worsen if no action is taken to improve the corridor in the near future."

From the TH 15 Action Plan

But over the last couple decades, as the population centers - and their economies - along the corridor have grown, TH 15 has been unable to meet the increasing demands placed upon it. Between 1990 and 2003, over 6,100 crashes occurred along the corridor, resulting in over 50 fatalities. Census data indicates that a very significant number of commuters - over 22,000 - travel to a different county along the corridor on their way to and from work each day. Traffic growth along some segments of the corridor has increased by 70%, and with overall volumes increasing over 50%. These trends will all most certainly worsen if no action is taken to improve the corridor in the near future.



In response to this challenge, the TH 15 Corridor Coalition was established by some forward thinking individuals who understood how critically important a safe and efficient TH 15 corridor is for the residents, businesses and visitors of the region. Since its initial organizational meeting in the spring of 2004, the Coalition has effectively positioned itself to be the primary spokesperson, advocate, fundraiser, lobbyist, and project manager for all activities relating to the improvement of the corridor.