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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: December 2, 2010

Economic Health and Public Well-Being Will Benefit from Gas Tax Increase
Local Civil Engineers Announce Support for Deficit Commission's User Fee Increase Proposal

Kansas City, Mo.—A proposal from President Obama's Deficit Commission to increase the gas tax as a means of reducing the federal deficit and improving the nation's transportation infrastructure today received a vote of support from the Kansas City Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), as well as the organization's national office.

"For decades we have under-invested in our transportation infrastructure, despite the fact that congestion and deteriorating conditions on our roads and highways leads to lost time and productivity for Kansas City's residents and businesses," said Joseph Marsh, P.E., president of ASCE's Kansas City Section. "It's no longer a question of whether or not we can afford to increase our investment in these critical systems. It's a question of how we can afford not to."

The federal motor fuels tax generates revenues that are reserved for investment in highway and public transportation improvements through the Highway Trust Fund. This tax, however, has not been adjusted since 1993 and has lost one-third of its purchasing power over the last 17 years. The Highway Trust Fund has become insolvent in recent years and required multiple emergency transfers from the General Fund. The current proposal includes a 15 cent increase in the gas tax that would be phased in over 3 years beginning in 2013 and would eliminate transfers from the General Fund.

In Missouri, 31 percent of roads are in poor or mediocre condition and 30 percent of bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete, according to TRIP and the Federal Highway Administration, respectively. Meanwhile, in Kansas, 20 percent of roads are in poor or mediocre condition and 20 percent of bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete, according to TRIP and the Federal Highway Administration, respectively. Driving on roads in need of repair costs motorists \$380 and \$319 each year in wasted time and fuel in Missouri and Kansas, respectively. Nationally, ASCE's 2009 *Report Card for America's Infrastructure* assigned the nation's infrastructure an overall grade of D, with bridges, roads and transit receiving grades of C, D- and D, respectively. It also noted that an investment of \$2.2 trillion over the next five years is necessary to bring those grades up to an acceptable level.

Founded in 1852, the American Society of Civil Engineers represents more than 140,000 civil engineers worldwide and is America's oldest national engineering society. For more information, visit www.asce.org.

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