

State and National

Plan provides for various upgrades in state's transportation systems

By KYLE YORK SPENCER

Staff Writer

The N.C. Board of Transportation plans to adopt a \$5 billion Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to be announced at its Nov. 3 meeting in Raleigh.

The plan to update the N.C. highway system provides a blueprint for seven years of highway constructions on the N.C. Intrastate Highway System and for various highway improvements in larger urban areas.

Both the intrastate system and loops program are part of a \$9.2 billion Highway Trust Fund Law which was adopted in July. The program will fund all secondary roads in North Carolina by the year 2006. It will also leave 96 percent of state residents within 10 miles of a major highway.

The TIP involves funding for interstate, bridge, rural, urban and safety

projects. The highway section of the TIP also includes schedules for individual projects in aviation, bicycle, public transportation and rail programs.

The aviation project allows the state to administer funds to the State Aid To Airports program, which funds airports in small communities. This year the state will almost match the federal funding for this program, said Paul Worley, public information officer for the Office of Transportation.

The bicycle project provides for the state's 2 million bicyclists by making on-road improvements, widening shoulders, and constructing signs and special bicycle railings for bridges. The state will match federal funds for this program, Worley said.

The public transportation program will fund transit across North Carolina. It provides for buses in cities and vans for rural areas. The state will match

federal funding for this project.

The rail program aims to maintain the existing state railroads by purchasing abandoned corridors from large railroad companies or helping short line railroads buy them.

By maintaining these railroads the state fosters business and encourages industry to build in certain areas where they have access to rail service, said Worley.

Maintaining or increasing rail service will be particularly important when road construction begins, Worley said. The state hopes to encourage drivers to consider other types of transportation in order to prevent severe traffic jams in construction areas, he said.

In addition to the above transportation programs, the board will be asked to allot \$21.8 million for highway construction contracts.

Bush-Gorbachev summit carries political relevance

By CHUCK WILLIAMS

Staff Writer

President Bush announced Tuesday he will meet with Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev in December aboard U.S. and Soviet naval vessels in the Mediterranean Sea.

The meeting will take place Dec. 2 and 3, probably off the coast of Italy, and will alternate between U.S. and Soviet ships. The meeting will precede a larger, full-scale summit scheduled for the late spring or early summer of 1990.

The meeting will be the first between Bush and Gorbachev since Bush's election. They met last year in New York City when Bush was president-elect.

The meeting appears to be an informal discussion of current superpower

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relations, the Eastern Europe situation and the state of Gorbachev's perestroika program for further democratization of the Soviet Union. U.S. officials hope to show cautious support for Gorbachev's initiatives for change.

"We're trying to indicate an interest in Gorbachev's program," said Robert Rupen, professor of political science at UNC. "In this meeting we're trying to show we approve of a lot of things he's doing. We want to project a positive image."

The meeting is also politically important to both leaders, despite its lesser magnitude in comparison to previous meetings with the Soviet Union.

Gorbachev is battling internal criticism as the Soviet economy continues to deteriorate, while Bush faces criticism for being too cautious in foreign affairs.

"I think anything Gorbachev can get immediately which will suggest his new policies will lead to better relations will work to his political advantage," said Joel Schwartz, UNC political science professor. "I think Bush rightfully has been criticized for being ineptly cautious and not really seizing opportunities of change which are taking place."

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has been looking to the U.S. for leadership, but it has been slow, Schwartz said.

The meeting has great importance for Gorbachev, who may have to come down harder on his domestic political opponents in the near future, and wants to assure the U.S. he is standing by his program despite the possible appearance of a setback.

"We will be helping him in his domestic power situation," Rupen said. However, Gorbachev must also guard against appearing weak in asking for Western support.

"Publicly, it would be very difficult for any Soviet leader to say they need the West to come to the rescue," Schwartz said. "Symbolically, Gorbachev wants the U.S. to treat (the Soviets) from a position of parity."

President Bush's view toward the

Soviets appears to have moderated. He originally had a skeptical approach to dealing with Gorbachev and his initiatives.

"His position has modified a lot," Rupen said. "The change in view had started with Reagan."

Bush has become more willing to accept the sincerity of perestroika, as did his predecessor. Reagan is often remembered for his reference to the Soviet Union as an "evil empire", but he later signed a historic arms control agreement with the Soviets.

"There has been a 360-degree turnaround," Schwartz said. "I think (Bush's caution) is a difference of personality. Reagan had the capacity for grand vision. George Bush's career has been bureaucratic appointments, which brings a cautious, conservative mentality. He doesn't want to disappoint anybody or get out ahead of anybody."

One of the main reasons the president has given for having the meeting is to discuss the changing political tide in Eastern Europe, such as Poland electing a non-Communist government, Hungary planning to hold free elections, and East Germans demonstrating for more freedoms.

Gorbachev has attained a great deal of popularity in Europe because of these changes.

"Eastern Europe is a very tricky situation," Rupen said. "To what extent are we encouraging Eastern Europe to go its own way? A lot of Europeans feel we have been dragging our feet, so — naturally — they will approve of the meeting."

Schwartz said: "When international public opinion polls are conducted to find who is the most important, charismatic political actor today, Gorbachev wins hands down. Unfortunately for him, he plays much better politically outside the Soviet Union than inside."

Although some experts question the value of these "mini-summit" meetings, others feel they are important and beneficial.

"My vote is to have these meetings, often," Rupen said. "You don't have to have a big treaty or deal to meet. I don't see anything wrong with these casual meetings."

State increases funding for teaching fellowships

By ERIC LUSK

Staff Writer

In another move to upgrade the quality of education in North Carolina, the General Assembly voted to invest \$4 million more in the N.C. Teaching Fellows Program.

The Fellows Program, which began in 1987, is designed to lure 400 of the state's top high school students into choosing teaching as a profession by offering a four-year, \$20,000 scholarship.

The scholarship requires the recipient to attend one of 13 participating public or private colleges and universities in North Carolina and agree to teach in the state for at least four years after graduation.

"We presently have 1200 of the state's best and brightest enrolled in the program," said Margaret Webb, N.C. legislative information officer. "The money voted for this year will fund scholarships for a third and fourth year of classes."

The legislature has already put \$10 million into the Fellows Program before this year, she said.

The 400 chosen in 1989 had an average SAT score of 1109, a cumulative GPA of 3.67 and were in the top 10 percent of their respective high school graduating classes, Webb said.

The Public School Forum administers the program statewide and coordinates activities within the high schools and the 13 participating colleges and universities. The Forum also selects the local and regional committees that choose the yearly 400 Fellows.

"The committees are looking for students with good communication skills, high academic achievement, a

potential for leadership and a commitment to improving education as a whole," Pat Sumner, director of the Teaching Fellows Program, said.

The selection process resembles the process used in choosing Morehead-Scholars, she said. Students must submit a writing sample, go through interview sessions and have recommendations.

The biggest problem the teaching profession faces today is the lack of emphasis placed on a good education, Sumner said.

"Education today has changed a lot from where it used to be. Most students today lack the understanding of the importance of a good education. They are concerned more with themselves and making money fast."

This lack of caring is not the fault of the students, she said. Somewhere between this generation and the last, the education system as a whole failed in promoting the true value of good schooling, she said.

"I hope that through this program we can get some really bright and excited people into the classrooms who can change all this," she said.

Each college and university further enriches the Fellows Program with a variety of activities and seminars.

"We've got all sorts of socials, parties and fund-raisers planned to help the students involved in the program get to know each other better," Charlotte Jones, director of teacher education at N.C. State University, said. "We also sponsor a monthly forum designed to get students enthusiastic about getting into the classroom."

NCSU has about 200 students enrolled in the Fellows Program, she said.



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