

## House votes to keep highway spending level,

By Joan Lowry  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Despite years of warnings that the nation's roads, bridges and transit systems are falling apart and will bring nightmarish congestion, the House on Thursday passed a six-year transportation bill that maintains the spending status quo.

The bill, approved on a bipartisan vote of 363-64, authorizes \$325 billion in spending through the 2021 federal budget year. But it provides money for only the first three years because lawmakers couldn't agree on a way to pay for it all. The measure would continue current rates of spending.

The bill is similar to a transportation bill passed by the Senate in July. Congressional leaders say they hope to quickly work out the differences between the two measures and send President Barack Obama a final bill before Thanksgiving. They also said they hope to find the money to pay for the last three years of the bill.

"At the funding levels proposed in both the House and Senate bills, the result will be more traffic," said Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx. He has said \$400 billion over six years is minimum needed to prevent matters from worsening.

Most lawmakers lauded the bill as a major accomplishment because it would assure states and localities that they can count on federal highway and transit aid for at least three years. It's hard

to plan major construction projects when availability of federal aid is in doubt. The House and Senate bills are first long-term funding bills in about a decade.

Since 2008, Congress has kept the federal Highway Trust Fund teetering on the edge of bankruptcy, unwilling to raise the federal 18.4 cents-a-gallon gasoline and 24.4-cent diesel taxes. The fuel taxes, the trust fund's main source of revenue, were last raised in 1993. Transportation aid has continued through dozens of short-term extensions and transfers of money from the general treasury to make up the gap between revenues and spending.

The House bill is filled with changes to transportation policy that reflect the small-government, pro-business philosophy of the chamber's GOP majority. But it is also a compromise that Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Bill Shuster, R-Pa., spent months negotiating with Rep. Peter DeFazio of Oregon, the panel's top Democrat. As a result, the bill also includes many provisions sought by Democrats or supported by lawmakers from both parties.

One change that gained wide support would direct \$4.5 billion a year to interstate highways and other roads designated as freight corridors to increase capacity and relieve bottlenecks, and a grant program of more than \$700 million a year for nationally significant highway and freight projects.

## Halloween event focused on safety

Sisters-Camp Sherman Fire District volunteers Kyle Sharek and Angel Cisneros Thorsvold, who are enrolled in the Fire Science program at Central Oregon Community College, incorporated their Fire Science class project with the annual Halloween event. As a part of their project, Angel and Kyle managed the fire safety booth, which focused on Halloween safety for kids and also fire and life safety around their home. "We interacted with 144 children at the fire safety and prevention booth and want to congratulate them for being prepared for fire and life safety emergency situations."

Cisneros Thorsvold and Sharek wanted to know how the community is doing in fire and safety prevention education, especially in regards to Halloween, and how the Fire Safety and Prevention program at Sisters-Camp Sherman Fire District can focus events for the future. Their goal was to let kids know the importance of awareness in fire and safety with prevention and awareness being key components.

As a part of their class project, each child who visited the booth would spin the fire prevention game wheel, which had important questions they felt children in the community should know. If they answered the question correctly, they won a prize. Below are a few of the results of those questions:

- Of the children participating in the game,
  - 80 percent knew to get out of the house when they hear a smoke alarm,
  - 80 percent knew to call



PHOTO PROVIDED

Kyle Sharek and Angel Cisneros Thorsvold manned a fire safety booth last Halloween.

9-1-1 in case of an emergency, and

- Over 80 percent knew the best places to place smoke alarms around their homes.

While Cisneros Thorsvold and Sharek were happy with the percentage of correct answers, they did find a few areas as a community we can improve upon to keep our families safe, and have passed along that information to the Sisters-Camp Sherman Fire District's Fire Safety Manager and prevention personnel:

- Have your child wear a costume that does not pose a

trip hazard.

- Wear masks that children can see out of easily.
- Use a flashlight at night and reflective wear on costume such as reflective tape, glow sticks, and/or a reflective trick or treat bag so drivers and other people can see you.

- Finally, use glow sticks or battery lights instead of candles inside pumpkins.

These are just a few things to keep in mind so for next year so kids and their families stay safe and everyone can have fun.



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