

Disbursement Of Highway Revenues Leaves Less Than Sixth For State Road Plans

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The gross revenue collected by the state from road users in 1951 will have an estimated total of \$47,650,000. When that revenue is all whittled down and distributed as by law provided and by necessity required there will remain an estimated \$7,500,000 of state funds available for highway construction on the primary and secondary highway systems. An allocation of approximately \$7,750,000 in federal highway money will boost the total available for improving the highway system during 1951 to approximately \$15,250,000.

It might be interesting to the uninitiated to know why it happens that the state will start out with \$47,650,000 of motorist contributed money at the beginning of the year and wind up with less than one-sixth of the amount out of which to construct, reconstruct or improve state highways. The record shows: A \$3,400,000 item set up to take care of gas tax refunds, provided for by law, as these accrue during the year. Added to this the secretary of state and the public utilities commissioner are given an other chunk of \$2,750,000 to pay the expenses involved in the collecting of gasoline taxes, license fees and

truck fees. These deductions reduce the footing to \$41,500,000, which is turned over to the state highway fund in the treasurer's office.

Next, 19 percent (\$7,900,000) is diverted to the counties by legislative fiat; an additional 10 percent (\$4,150,000) goes to the cities and another \$1,000,000 is apportioned to the state police. These three items make a total of \$13,050,000 and skin the highway fund down to \$28,450,000 which is the total the commission has left to use for running the highway department in all its functions.

Tapping the heavy divisional expenditures of the department is maintenance which has been set up for \$11,100,000 for 1951. Annual maintenance of the primary and secondary highways has increased approximately \$4,000,000 over the charges to that account in 1947 while the highway mileage has not increased materially.

This heavy increase in maintenance costs is chargeable to increasing costs of labor and materials, to the probability of a severe winter such as were the winters of 48-49 and 49-50 which increased costs in excess of \$1,500,000 annually, to fast heavy motor equipment and to overloading in violation of state laws.

In addition to maintenance comes operation (including the Parks department) \$1,800,000; administration, \$1,400,000; buildings, parks and equipment, \$1,800,000; debt service (annual bond retirement and accrued interest) \$350,000; surveys, \$750,000 and rights of way, \$3,000,000 bringing the total of non-construction expenses to \$20,200,000. This brings the accounting down to a constricted balance total of \$8,250,000 left for highway betterment, which shrinks still more by subtraction of \$750,000 for minor betterments, thus leaving \$7,500,000 of state highway revenue for highway construction during 1951. That, plus the \$7,750,000 Uncle Sam is handing to the state as federal aid and an additional \$2,000,000 which he is spending annually on forest highways.

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\$120.00	\$124.50	\$111.90	\$141.00	\$111.90	\$111.90	\$111.90	\$111.90	\$111.90	\$111.90	\$118.50	\$118.50
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