

Engineers: U.S. infrastructure close to failing

By Meagan Clark, International Business Times

U.S. infrastructure – roads, bridges, rail, drinking water, waste water, solid waste and more—is close to flunking according to a recent assessment from the American Society of Civil Engineers.

Once every four years, America's civil engineers assess the nation's infrastructure with an A to F report card. The engineers grade eight major categories: capacity, condition, funding, future need, operation, maintenance, public safety, resilience and innovation. This year's grade average of all eight categories is a modest improvement, but hardly one to cheer about – it's a D+ compared to a D in 2009. The nation's infrastructure GPA has averaged in the D's since 1998 for delayed maintenance and underinvestment across most categories.

"While the modest progress is encouraging, it is clear that we have a significant backlog of overdue maintenance across our infrastructure systems, a pressing need for modernization, and an immense opportunity to create reliable, long-term funding sources to avoid wiping out our recent gains," the report states.

Solid waste earned the highest grade, a B-.

City and state efforts to repair and update some of the nation's most vulnerable bridges improved the bridge category, and short-term federal funding improved several categories. However, improvements are not all due to government. Increased private investment for efficiency and connectivity helped

rail's grade improve.

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