

Opinion: California is falling apart

By Patt Morrison, Los Angeles Times

On July 19 the collapse of a “functionally obsolete” bridge shut down nearly 50 miles of Interstate 10. What was the problem? Too much rain, too little infrastructure. Infrastructure? Don’t stop reading: Your life, literally, depends on infrastructure. Steven P. Erie, a political science professor at UC San Diego, says that if California infrastructure were a student in his class, he’d give it an “F.” His many books – the latest is “Paradise Plundered,” about San Diego’s civic failings – detail the scale of California’s governance mess and the massive task of remedying our la-de-da attitude that freeways and airports and levees built 60, 80, 100 years ago will last forever.

The I-10 bridge washout makes me think of the adage, “For want of a nail, a horseshoe was lost, for want of a shoe, a horse was lost, and ultimately a kingdom is lost – all for want of a nail.”

It’s bridges, it’s pavement; we have difficulty expanding our airports and ports. California, and particularly Southern California, used to be a world leader in physical infrastructure, and we’ve gone from the top of the pack in 1960 to the bottom. We have been asleep at the wheel. We’re like Rip Van Winkle when it comes to infrastructure maintenance.

Read the whole story

