



## ***Case History***

### **Construction Industries of Rhode Island (CIRI) Public Affairs and Advocacy: Highway Bond Referendum**

#### The Challenge:

Convince Rhode Island voters to approve a ballot referendum authorizing the State to borrow \$63.5 million in bonds for maintenance and repair of its transportation infrastructure, in order to qualify for Federal 8:1 matching funds.

#### The Goals:

Secure voter approval for the bond issue and ensure that state and federal funds would continue to be available for roadways, highways and bridges

Create awareness among road construction companies of the work the Construction Industries of Rhode Island (CIRI) does on its members' behalf

#### The Strategy:

Convince voters the referendum would result in short- and long-term economic and quality-of-life benefits

Conduct an integrated communications campaign to reach voters with publicity, direct communications and advertising to demonstrate why the money was needed for immediate and long-term projects

Distribute brochure to area organizations for their members, including chambers of commerce, labor unions, Rhode Island Public Transit Authority

Arrange for a report by The Road Information Program (TRIP), a non-profit transportation research group based in Washington, D.C., which ranked Rhode Island 48 among 50 states in terms of structurally deficient bridges

Work with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (DOT) to support its briefing for weekly newspapers and schedule an outdoor news conference in front of one of the bridges with officials from TRIP, CIRI and the DOT.

#### The Results:

Media coverage on the four network-affiliate Providence TV stations, on the three top news radio stations, and in virtually all the daily and weekly newspapers throughout the state, as well as some web sites

Referendum passed with 72.5% voter approval, the highest percentage in ten years