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SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

Economics

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The following review will appear in the March 2011 issue of CHOICE. The review is for your internal use only until our publication date of 01 March 2011

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LePatner, Barry B. **Too big to fail: America's failing infrastructure and the way forward.** Foster Publishing, 2010. 234p index afp ISBN 9780984497805, \$27.95

This well-researched book on the US's failure to maintain its bridges and highways straddles political advocacy and scholarly work. One wishes its merits as a political document were stronger, but politicians are not apt to read through this fact-filled survey of historical and current failures of the US's funding system to address the rapidly deteriorating highway infrastructure. LePatner, a lawyer specializing in real estate and the construction industries, is most compelling when describing personal accounts of the Interstate 35 West bridge collapse in Minneapolis and the near failures of New York's East River bridges. The chapters on the history of highway funding in the US, public-private partnerships, and the causes of systemic failures to maintain what has been built are excellent. Where the book loses its political punch is in its detailed statistical recapitulations of recent national commissions' findings on transportation financing, and the author's call for yet another national commission to address the problem. In summary, an excellent book for students and professionals, which one hopes will heighten the sense of urgency to increase funding for highway and bridge maintenance. There is no comparable book. The index and 37 pages of endnotes are excellent. **Summing Up: Highly recommended.** All readership levels. -- D. Brand, formerly, Harvard University