

SAVE \$0.99  
INSIDE 09

RACING ★ FINAL

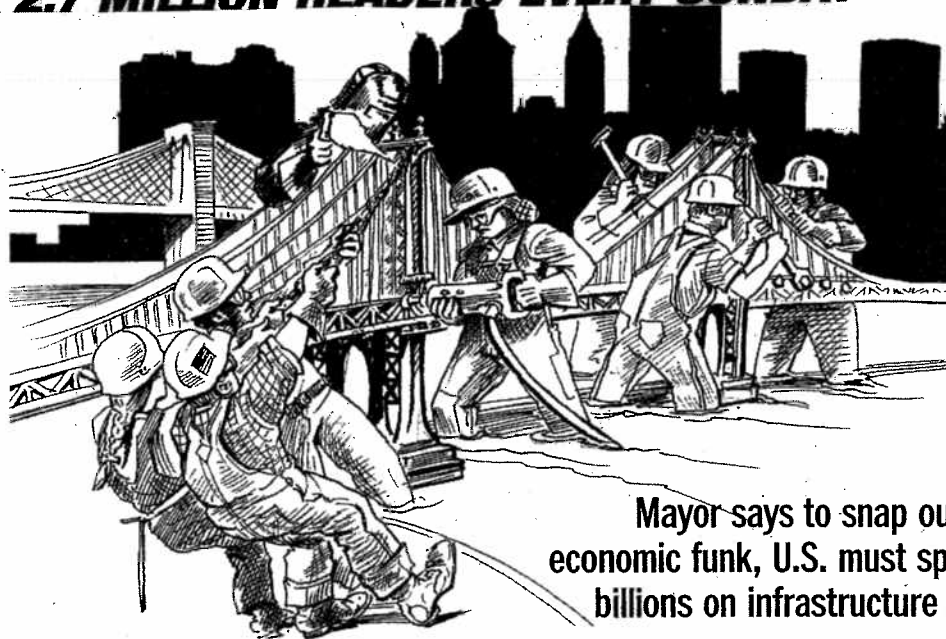
Sunday, August 3, 2008

# DAILY NEWS

\$1.00

2.7 MILLION READERS EVERY SUNDAY

NYDailyNews.com



Mayor says to snap out of economic funk, U.S. must spend billions on infrastructure in...

## A New New Deal

**T**he national economy is probably going to get worse before it gets better. That will mean, unfortunately, more layoffs, more foreclosures and more pain for American families. Tack on rising prices for gas, food and health care, and the picture goes from bad to worse.

It would be easy to blame the whole mess on the banks who offered mortgages recklessly and the borrowers who should have known better. But the mortgage meltdown is only half the story. Congress also made several critical errors in its economic stewardship that require correcting.

First, instead of balancing its budget when the economy was strong, it ran up a massive debt. More than 40 years ago, John F. Kennedy told us that the time to repair the roof is when the sun is shining. In New York City, that's exactly what we did. We used the good times to save billions for the future and pay down debt. And when the storm clouds started gathering last year, we tightened our belts by cutting agency budgets by more than \$1 billion.

In Washington, they did exactly the opposite. They spent most of this decade running up bills with reckless abandon, no matter which party was in control. This heavy borrowing has left us poor-

ly positioned to address the downturn, and it has contributed to the weakness of the dollar, which makes oil and food supply (and all imports) more expensive.

Second, Congress has squandered much of the money we've borrowed. What do we have to show for the federal government's huge deficit spending? Where are the new schools, the new rail links, the new high-speed trains, the new airport runways, the new levees, the new port facilities?

They don't exist, because Congress has been on a pork barrel feeding frenzy. That's how we get bridges to nowhere and roads that states don't even want.

Mopping up this mess is going to take two things we don't see enough of in Washington: vision and courage. We cannot borrow our way out of this problem, which is what Congress tried to do last winter when it borrowed \$150 billion for an economic stimulus centered on doling out rebate checks.

One of our chief economic problems is that, as a nation, we have been borrowing and spending too much money. Trying to solve that problem by borrowing and spending more is not going to work. It's like, as I've said before, trying to cure an alcoholic by giving him a drink.

Unfortunately, however, there is increasing talk in Washington about cutting yet another round of rebate checks, which will finance another round of spending sprees on goods manufactured mostly overseas, like televisions and stereos. And it will do almost nothing to help our economy.

We have the opportunity to get the stimulus right this time—if we take a different approach: putting more Americans to work building the infrastructure that we need to compete in the global economy and to remain the world's economic superpower.

This approach will have an immediate economic impact if Congress funds vitally important projects that could have shovels in the ground within six months. Here in New York, a short-term infusion of money would allow us to accelerate progress on projects such as the Second Ave. Subway, the 7 train extension and the Fulton Street Transit Center.

Investing in these kinds of projects across the country would reduce unemployment; increase revenue for cities and states that are struggling to balance their books; and attract billions in private investment over the next few decades.

Remember, the New Deal didn't just help get us through the Depression. It created the foundation for a generation of economic growth. That foundation is now cracking because Con-

gress has been funding projects based purely on pork barrel politics, not merit.

It's time for a new New Deal — one that invests more money, more wisely. It is as impossible to imagine America without FDR's New Deal as it is to imagine the country without Eisenhower's interstate highway system. Those massive public investments epitomized both the vision and courage that are desperately lacking in today's Washington.

Candidates and elected officials listen to voters, but who talks about infrastructure? We must start talking — and start delivering a very simple message to our elected officials: Stop playing politics and start putting people to work building America's future.

China, India, Europe — they're all investing far more in vital infrastructure than we are. If that keeps up, America's best days will be over.

We can't afford to be silent. To add your voice to the conversation, please visit [www.investinininfrastructure.org](http://www.investinininfrastructure.org) and sign our online petition.

By insisting that vision and courage trump politics and pork, we can change the debate in Washington. We can get our economy moving again. And we can secure America's place in the 21st century.

*Bloomberg is the 108th mayor of the City of New York and co-chairman of the Build America's Future coalition.*



**Michael Bloomberg**