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Contact: Dave Smallen
Tel.: 202-366-5568

BTS Releases April Transportation Services Index (TSI) Combined Index and Freight Index Reach New Record Highs

The Transportation Services Index (TSI) reached the highest level in the 14-year period covered by the index with a 0.8 percent rise in April, and the Freight TSI reached an all-time high with a 0.5 percent increase, the Department of Transportation's Bureau of Transportation Statistics reported today.

The overall TSI rose every month since August 2003 except for a drop in January this year. The April level of 124.4 (1996=100) was 8.2 percent higher than in April 2003. The March TSI was 123.4, revised from the 122.5 reported in BTS' June release.

The Freight Transportation Services Index has risen the past three months to a level of 126.0 (1996=100). The April level was 6.3 percent higher than in April 2003.

TSI is a single seasonally adjusted index of the month-to-month changes in the output of services provided by the for-hire transportation industries, including railroad, air, truck, inland waterways, pipeline, and local transit.

The index includes historic data from 1990 to the present, allowing for examination of trends, peaks and low-points. Changes are measured against the base year of 1996. The TSI is still under development and is considered experimental.

The Transportation Services Index for Freight

On a seasonally adjusted basis, the TSI for freight increased 0.5 percent in April from March's level of 125.4. The April 2004 level of 126.0 was 6.3 percent higher than the April 2003 level of 118.5 and is a record high for the 14-year period covered by the index. The March TSI for freight was 125.4, revised from the 123.3 reported in BTS' June release.

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**TRANSPORTATION SERVICES INDEX RELEASE
ADD ONE**

Transportation Services Index for Passengers

The TSI for passengers was up 1.7 percent in April following a small drop in March. The April level of 121.1 is 13.3 percent higher than the April 2003 level of 106.9 and less than 0.3 percent below the record high of 121.5 in September 2000. The March TSI for passengers was 119.1, revised from the 120.5 reported in BTS' June release.

The rise of TSI for passengers in April was solely from the increase of the air passenger index since the other passenger indexes — rail passenger and transit — decreased in April. The index for air passenger transportation rose 21.4 percent since April 2003, fueling the growth of the Passenger TSI. April 2004 was a record high for air passenger transportation, surpassing the previous high in September 2000 by 2.5 percent.

Table 1: Percent changes in the Transportation Services Index by Month Since October 2003 (Seasonally Adjusted):

	TSI		Freight		Passenger	
	Index	Pct. Change	Index	Pct. Change	Index	Pct. Change
October	117.4	0.3	119.1	0.5	113.9	-0.3
November	119.4	1.7	120.6	1.3	116.8	2.5
December	122.4	2.5	125.0	3.6	116.7	-0.1
January	120.1	-1.8	121.8	-2.6	116.7	0.0
February	121.9	1.5	123.1	1.1	119.5	2.4
March	123.4	1.2	125.4	1.9	119.1	-0.3
April	124.4	0.8	126.0	0.5	121.1	1.7

Table 2: Percent changes in the Transportation Services Index from Year-to-Year April TSI (1996 = 100)

	TSI	Percent change from previous year
1996	99.3	0.7
1997	105.0	5.8
1998	112.4	7.0
1999	115.2	2.5
2000	113.6	-1.4
2001	114.8	1.1
2002	112.5	-1.9
2003	115.0	2.2
2004	124.4	8.2

**TRANSPORTATION SERVICES INDEX RELEASE
ADD TWO**

Table 3: Percent Changes in the Transportation Services Index from Previous Years to 2004

April to April

Percent change to April 2004	Since April	Duration
8.2	2003	One Year
10.6	2002	Two Years
8.4	2001	Three Years
9.6	2000	Four Years
8.0	1999	Five Years
10.7	1998	Six Years
18.5	1997	Seven Years
25.4	1996	Eight Years

Table 4: Percent changes in the Freight Transportation Services Index from Year-to-Year

April Freight TSI (1996 = 100)

	Freight TSI	Percent change from previous year
1996	99.7	-1.0
1997	105.8	6.1
1998	115.0	8.6
1999	116.8	1.6
2000	112.1	-4.1
2001	112.8	0.6
2002	113.6	0.7
2003	118.5	4.4
2004	126.0	6.3

Table 5: Percent changes in the Passenger Transportation Services Index from Year-to-Year

April Passenger TSI (1996 = 100)

	Passenger TSI	Percent change from previous year
1996	98.3	4.8
1997	103.4	5.2
1998	107.0	3.5
1999	111.7	4.5
2000	117.7	5.4
2001	120.1	2.0
2002	110.6	-7.9
2003	106.9	-3.4
2004	121.1	13.3

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TRANSPORTATION SERVICES INDEX RELEASE ADD THREE

During the six months ending in April, the TSI rose 6.0 percent (seasonally adjusted). The Freight TSI rose 5.8 percent and the Passenger TSI rose 6.3 percent during the six-month period.

Note: TSI numbers (Total, Freight, and Passenger) were revised because additional data became available for seasonality adjustments and revisions in the output data of the component transportation services. These changes have a larger impact on more recent numbers. In April 2004, the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) replaced the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) as the basis for GDP by industry as weights in aggregating individual indexes of transportation services by mode and type of services into composite indexes. SIC-based GDP by industry data will no longer be published by the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA). This change has a minor impact on individual numbers but almost no impact on the general trends of TSI.

Brief Explanation of the TSI

The Transportation Services Index (TSI) is a measure of the month-to-month changes in the output of services provided by the for-hire transportation industries.

The TSI tells us how the output of transportation services has increased or decreased from month to month. The index can be examined together with other economic indicators to produce a better understanding of the current and future course of the economy. The movement of the index over time can be compared with other economic measures to understand the relationship of changes in transportation output to changes in Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

The TSI is still under development and is therefore considered experimental. It is being examined for refinements in data sources, methodologies and interpretations.

The freight transportation index consists of:

For hire trucking (not including parcel services),
Railroad freight services (including rail based intermodal shipments such as containers on flat cars),
Inland waterways transportation,
Pipeline transportation (including principally petroleum and petroleum products and natural gas), and
Air freight.

The index does not include international or coastal waterborne movements, private trucking, courier services, or the US Postal Service.

The passenger transportation index consists of:

Local transit,
Intercity passenger rail, and
Passenger air transportation.

The index does not include intercity bus, sight seeing services, ferry services, taxi service, private automobile usage, or bicycling and other non-motorized means of transportation.

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