

## County talks support of ATRIP-2

By Will Whaley | Posted: Wednesday, March 8, 2017 9:51 am

The Jackson County Commission took the first steps in supporting the Alabama commission association's ATRIP-2 plan.

At their work session on Monday, March 6, the commission discussed the temporary fix to road problems in the county that could be fixed by the ATRIP-2 project.

"The Alabama of County Commissions of Alabama (ACCA) has submitted a resolution of support for the ATRIP-2 bond issue," said Jackson County Commission chairman Matthew Hodges. "This is a bond issue for a 3-cent gas increase statewide. This would net Jackson Count about \$12 million and the municipalities in Jackson County about \$3 million.

"As it was stated last week, this is a short term fix," said Hodges. "I would much rather have a life preserver instead of waiting around for something to come by. I do believe, personally, this is something that I really hope the legislation will get behind and support in some manner. I think it is important for taxpayers to know that this will not stick around forever.

"It also will help us get a tremendous amount of work done," said Hodges. "It is better than what we are doing right now, which is limited because of the resources that we have, and hopefully if this is done there will be a better long-term solution that will be able to help us out in the next several years."

Commissioner Jason Venable said he was in support of it.

"It is not a fix all, but we are in dire need to do something," he said.

County Engineer Jonathan Campbell gave the commission numbers of how old certain bridges are in the county.

"Out of the 185 bridges we have, 119 are over 50 years old and 69 are over 70 years old," he said. "I think one attraction to this is that we are not restricted on how we spend the money. So there is some flexibility there. We can be resourceful and innovative with the funds. Even though contractors will do it we can really stretch that. Also, because this is not tied to other aid standards, we could rehabilitate some bridges instead of rebuilding altogether. There is room in this that the county can be resourceful in how spending is done, and that is really the attraction for us."

Campbell said there was plenty to do with this money.

"We do not know where things will be later with technology and other things, but this will buy us some time until we can find a long-term fix," said Commissioner Melinda Gilbert.