Sometime in 1974, the nation will pass the “bloody milestone” of two million motor vehicle traffic deaths since the advent of the motor car, Congressman Roger Zion told an audience of public officials, roadbuilders, and engineers here this morning.

The southern Indiana congressman warned that, at current rates, “we will suffer more deaths due to highway accidents in the next ten years than in all of the wars since, and including, the American Revolutionary War.”

Many of these deaths, Zion said, could be avoided upon completion of the Interstate and Defense Highway System. He said that only half as many deaths per passenger-mile occur on this route in comparison with the rest of our system.

In spite of the critical need for continuing the construction of safe, dependable highways, there is currently no federal program for financing them, Zion said. He pointed out that this is the first time since World War II that there has not been a federal highway funding bill. Differences in the House and Senate versions of this legislation prevented passage of a highway bill at the close of the 92nd Congress last October.

Looking into his “crystal ball,” Zion predicted that the Senate would pass its version of a bill in late March and the House would pass its version in mid-April. This would bring a conference between the two houses in early May.

Zion predicted that pressure from state highway administrations and state legislators for funds will force Congress to agree on a bill that would see road-building equipment moving again by mid-year.

“Not to do so would not only continue the murder on our roadways, but would deny the travelers the safe roads for which their billions of dollars in gasoline taxes are collected,” Zion said.