## SunHerald

Bad roads and bridges in Mississippi are costing motorists big bucks

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**FRONT PAGE** 



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According to a study from the nonprofit transportation group TRIP, deteriorating roadways are costing Coast motorists an average of \$1,267 a year for vehicle upkeep, lost time and fuel, and crashes. The Lorraine Road Bridge spanning the Biloxi River was closed in late 2015 because of safety concerns until a new bridge could be built.

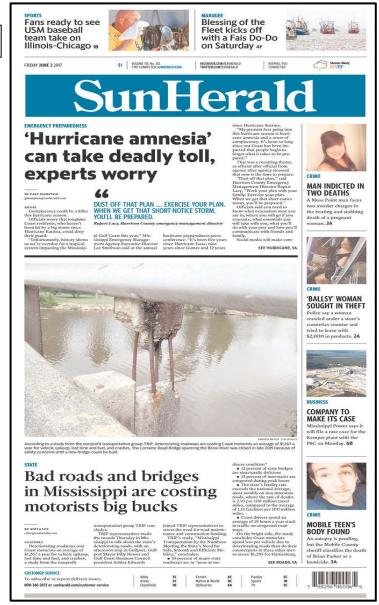
Gulfport - Deteriorating roadways cost Coast motorists an average of \$1,267 a year for vehicle upkeep, lost time and fuel, and crashes, a study from the nonprofit transportation group TRIP concludes.

TRIP representative are making the rounds in Mississippi to talk about the state's deteriorating roads, with a stop planned in Gulfport on Thursday afternoon. Gulfport Mayor Billy Hewes and Gulf Coast Business Council president Ashley Edwards will join TRIP representatives, who are starting off their day in Jackson, at 2:30 p.m. at the municipal harbor to talk about the report.

"Mississippi Transportation by the Numbers: Meeting the State's Need for Safe, Smooth and Efficient Mobility" concludes that

- 55 percent of major state roadways are in "poor or mediocre condition,"
- 12 percent of state bridges are structurally deficient,
- 13 percent of interstates are congested during peak hours,
- and the state's fatality rate exceeds the national average, most notably on non-interstate roads, where the rate of deaths is 2.93 per 100 million travel miles, compared to the average of 1.13 fatalities per 100 million miles.

On the bright side, the study concludes Coast motorists spend less per vehicle due to deteriorating roads than do their counterparts in three other metro areas: \$1,293 for Hattiesburg, \$1,870 for DeSoto County in North Mississippi and \$2,046 for Jackson.



TRIP is funded by equipment manufacturers, contractors, insurance companies and others with an interest in road construction and safety.

The goal of its annual reports on road and bridge conditions, by state, is to increase awareness, and give policymakers and lawmakers information helpful in funding decisions.

"Right now, there's simply not enough transportation money available to keep the roads in good repair and keep them running efficiently and safely," said Carolyn Bonifas Kelly, TRIP's associate director of research and communication.

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