

SunHerald

Bad roads and bridges in Mississippi are costing motorists big bucks

BY ANITA LEE

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FRONT PAGE



AMANDA MCCOY SUN HERALD

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 representatives 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.

SPORTS Fans ready to see USM baseball team take on Illinois-Chicago 1B

MARQUEE Blessing of the Fleet kicks off with a Fais Do-Do on Saturday 4F

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EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

'Hurricane amnesia' can take deadly toll, experts worry

BY PAUL HANFORD
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REKOR: Complacency could be a killer this hurricane season. Officials worry that longtime Coast residents, who haven't been hit by a big storm since Hurricane Katrina, could drop their guard. "Unfortunately, history shows us we're overdue for a tropical system impacting the Missis-

“DUST OFF THAT PLAN ... EXERCISE YOUR PLAN. WHEN WE GET THAT SHORT-NOTICE STORM, YOU'LL BE PREPARED.”
Robert Lucy, Harrison County emergency management director

pi Gulf Coast this year," Mississippi Emergency Management Agency Executive Director Lee Smithson said at the annual hurricane preparedness press conference. "It's been five years since Hurricane Isaac, nine years since Gustav and 12 years

since Hurricane Katrina. "My greatest fear going into this hurricane season is hurricane amnesia and a sense of complacency. It's been so long since our Coast has been impacted that people begin to forget what it takes to be prepared." That was a recurring theme, as officials after agency stressed that now is the time to prepare. "Dust off that plan," said Harrison County Emergency Management Director Robert Lucy. "Work your plan with your family. Exercise your plan. When we get that short-notice storm, you'll be prepared." Officials said you need to know what evacuation route you are in, where you will go if you evacuate, what essentials you will take with you, what you'll do with your pets and how you'll communicate with friends and family. Social media will make com-

SEE HURRICANE, 5A

CRIME MAN INDICTED IN TWO DEATHS
A Moss Point man faces two murder charges in the beating and stabbing death of a pregnant woman. 3A

CRIME 'BALLSY' WOMAN SOUGHT IN THEFT
Police say a woman crawled under a store's cosmetics counter and tried to leave with \$2,000 in products. 2A

BUSINESS COMPANY TO MAKE ITS CASE
Mississippi Power says it will file a rate case for the Kemper plant with the PSC on Monday. 6B

CRIME MOBILE TEEN'S BODY FOUND
An autopsy is pending, but the Mobile County sheriff classifies the death of Brian Parker as a homicide. 3A

STATE

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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 representatives to stress the need for road maintenance and construction funding. TRIP's study, "Mississippi Transportation by the Numbers: Meeting the State's Need for Safe, Smooth and Efficient Mobility," concludes:

- 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
- 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.
- Coast drivers spend an average of 19 hours a year stuck in traffic on congested roadways.
- 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.

SEE ROADS, 5A

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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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