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Consultants: Missouri roads, bridges need better funding

October 4th, 2018 by Bob Watson



Employees of Boone Construction Co. work on the MoDOT Route B project on June 19, 2017, which starts at the intersection of Lorenzo Greene Drive in Cole County and concludes at Route 133 in Meta.

Photo by Julie Smith/News Tribune.

Missouri's roads and bridges continue to deteriorate, costing all drivers a total of \$7.8 billion a year, according to a new report from TRIP — a Washington, D.C.-based national transportation research group once known as "The Road Information Program."

In Mid-Missouri alone, road and bridge conditions, congestion and the lack of some safety features costs \$1,477 per year, per driver, the report said, "due to higher vehicle operating costs, traffic crashes and congestion-related delays."

The report covered all roads and bridges, whether maintained by the state Transportation Department, or by cities and counties. Carolyn Bonifas Kelly, TRIP's associate director of research and communications, helped write the new report.

"Those costs are, already, startlingly high, and they are projected to grow even higher in the future," she said, "unless the state can provide additional funding that can improve road and bridge conditions, make the system more efficient and less congested, and reduce the number of fatalities and crashes on the state's roads."

Kelly told reporters at a Wednesday afternoon news conference that the new report, "Missouri Transportation by the Numbers: Meeting the State's Need for Safe, Smooth and Efficient Mobility," did not make any comparisons with TRIP's 2015 report on the state of Missouri's roads and bridges.

However, the News Tribune reported on May 1, 2015, that earlier report said the poor condition of Mid-Missouri roads cost area drivers more than \$1,300 each year while, statewide, the total costs were listed at \$4.5 billion.

that you drive on — are in either poor or mediocre condition." Statewide, she said, 13 percent of Missouri's bridges are structurally deficient — with the report noting Missouri ranks eleventh highest in the nation. In Mid-Missouri, only 10 percent of the bridges were in that category.

"That means there's significant deterioration to the major components of the bridge," Kelly said. "It's important to note these bridges are (still) safe to travel. "And they're maintained and monitored on a regular basis by the organizations that are responsible for their upkeep."

The report didn't cite any specific roads or bridges contributing to those numbers. "Missouri's transportation network is, truly, the backbone of the state's economy," Kelly said. "It moves \$495 billion worth of goods in, and out, of the state each year, and it serves the state's 4 million licensed drivers, as well as those who are passing through."

In addition to congestion and deteriorating conditions, she said, the state's road and bridge system has "a high fatality rate — and that will continue to be the case, without additional transportation funding."

SaferMO.COM Spokesman Scott Charton said that's where Proposition D's supporters come in, urging Missourians to vote for the ballot measure Nov. 6.

"Prop D will provide more than \$400 million in new, annual funding for Missouri roads and bridges, when it's fully phased in," Charton said.

If voters approve the proposal next month, the state's current, 17 cents per gallon tax on gasoline and diesel fuel would rise to 19.5 cents a gallon on July 1, 2019, then climb another 2.5 cents each year until July 1, 2022, when it would stop at 27 cents per gallon.

"That costs the average Missouri motorist about \$1.25 a month," Charton said. "That's about a cup of coffee."

Len Toenjes, president of the Associated General Contractors of Missouri and SaferMO.com's co-chair, said the TRIP report wasn't a surprise.

"I think, for people who drive the roads every day, (the report) quantifies the waste of time, the waste of money (and) the frustration we all

SEATS OPEN

Jefferson City is seeking qualified applicants to fill vacancies on a few city boards and a committee.

LOCAL E1



DISTRICT CHAMPS

The Helms Lady Crusaders defeated Palmyra 5-0 on Wednesday to win the Class 1 District 8 tennis championship.

SPORTS C1

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Joel Lehman teaches a technique to Mady Perry on Wednesday during Combat Boots and High Heels a free self-defense class for female service members...

Combating the unexpected

Women take self-defense classes during Domestic Violence Awareness Month. The report didn't cite any specific roads or bridges contributing to those numbers.

Missed deadlines cost millions in potential disaster aid

JEFFERSON CITY (AP) — As the floodwaters recede and the recovery begins, communities swamped by Hurricane Florence may still be facing disaster aid denials...

Missouri down to 1 abortion clinic amid legal battle

JEFFERSON CITY (AP) — An abortion clinic in Jefferson City, Missouri is down to one after closing another...



Daily dip

Darren Randle uses a dip net to clean out debris from the sidewalk at the City Plaza and Clark Monument at the Kelly Trailhead Plaza.

Weather forecast and local news snippets including 'OUTSIDE', 'INSIDE', 'ESCAPE', and 'WATERCOOLER'.