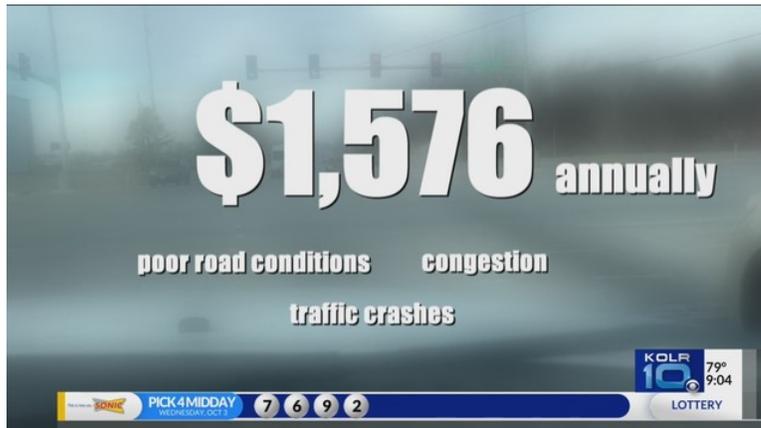


## Report: Deficient Roads Costing Drivers Hundreds

By: Jenifer Abreu



SPRINGFIELD, Mo. -- More than half of Missouri's major roads are either in poor or mediocre condition according to a report released Wednesday, and that's costing drivers hundreds of dollars every year.

"Once you've left your neighborhood, you're on one of the roads being looked at in this report," said Rocky Moretti, Director of Policy and Research for TRIP, a national nonprofit transportation research organization in DC.

"We've typically done a Missouri report every two to three years," said Moretti.

In Springfield, his report shows 21 percent of major roads are in poor condition and another 22 are considered in mediocre.

"Which basically means that two out of every five miles of major roads have pavements giving motorists a rough ride," he said.

The report finds 32 people are killed every year in the Springfield area in traffic crashes. It also finds that approximately one in eight of the state's bridges is structurally deficient, that includes 28 bridges in Springfield.

"It's not to say that the bridges are in danger of collapse or they'd be closed. But it's a warning sign that significant investment is needed to keep those bridges in good condition," Moretti said.

The report finds the average motorist spends nearly \$1,576 dollars annually due to poor road conditions, congestion, and crashes.

"We're very aware of the cost of the gallon of gas as we put it in our vehicle, but sometimes we take for granted the wear and tear," said Ron Replogle, Honorary Chair of SaferMO.com, a coalition advocating for Proposition D.

Replogle says Prop D is a solution to Missouri's road problems.

"Obviously takes funding to do those things," he said.

And if you drive, you would help come up with that funding by paying a few cents more at the pump.

Prop D, which you will see on the ballot in November would raise the state gas tax by 2.5 cents per year for the next four years.

"The last time the state gasoline tax was raised was in 1996," Replogle said. "22 years ago."

So by 2022, it would increase the state gasoline tax from 17 cents to 27 cents.

"That's about \$5 a month when it's implemented fully. That's about \$60 a year," Replogle said.

A lawsuit filed earlier this year requesting it be removed from the ballot claimed Prop. D made it on the ballot unconstitutionally because the sales tax was attached to two other items within Prop D - another road funding effort and tax exemption on Olympic prizes.

That lawsuit was dismissed last month, allowing it to be on the ballot.

"This was passed by our legislative process, to give the citizens of Missouri a say-so," Replogle said. "It's not our legislators saying 'let's raise our gas tax', they're putting it on the ballot for the people of Missouri to make that decision. And I think that is the proper way to do that."

The report was released Wednesday at the Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce whose Board of Directors has endorsed Proposition D.