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Report highlights North Dakota's road funding needs

JESSICA HOLDMAN [Bismarck Tribune](#)



Terry Traynor is the executive director of the North Dakota Association of Counties.

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The North Dakota Association of Counties is characterizing proposed adjustments to the state's oil and gas Gross Production Tax formula to fund infrastructure as a "good start."

"But it doesn't get us all the way there," said Terry Traynor, NDACo's executive director.

The state faces a possible \$2.5 billion shortfall from 2018 to 2023 in transportation funding — which works out to a need for an additional \$500 million annually — according to a report by a Washington, D.C., based research group highlighted by NDACo at its annual conference in Bismarck on Tuesday.



Rocky Moretti is with TRIP, a national transportation research group.

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According to a study by The Road Improvement Program, 36 percent of North Dakota's major locally and state-maintained urban roads and highways have pavements in poor condition and 28 percent are rated in mediocre condition. TRIP Director of Policy and Research Rocky Moretti said 14 percent of the bridges in the state are structurally deficient — figures that are above the national average, with the bridge numbers being significantly higher than the 9 percent national average. TRIP's numbers are based on reporting by the North Dakota Department of Transportation.

Moretti also said 46 percent of the state's bridges are reaching 50 years of age, a time when most need repair or replacement. About 50 percent of those structurally deficient bridges are

on the county system, according to Traynor.

Of those roads listed in the report as in need of preservation work that don't have the necessary funds for completion, Interstate 94 in Morton County between Highway 25 and the Grant Marsh Bridge is included, as well as Highway 1806 between Fort Rice and Mandan and Seventh and Ninth Streets in Bismarck between Front Street and Bismarck Expressway.

Energy-related revenue in North Dakota used for transportation increased from \$216 million in 2012 to \$619 million in 2017 before dropping to \$194 million in 2018, the TRIP report said.

"They did a great job of moving the needle," Traynor said of the 2013 and 2015 state legislatures.

"As the study indicates, much work remains and the resources currently are not available to adequately address and support that work," said Traynor, adding that the funding proposal by Sen. Rich Wardner, R-Dickinson, would fit well in addressing a portion of what was included in the TRIP report.

Read the full report at http://www.tripnet.org/docs/ND_Progress_and_Challenges_TRIP_Report_October_2018.pdf.

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