

# ALBUQUERQUE BUSINESS FIRST

## NM's rural roads are even worse than you might think, report says



A new report ranks New Mexico's rural roads third worst in the country.

WELLESENTERPRISES

By Marco Torrez – News intern, Albuquerque Business First | **May 24, 2019**

A new report ranks New Mexico's rural roads third worst in the country.

Poor road conditions affect energy and food distributors throughout the state, according to The Road Improvement Program (TRIP), a nonprofit research organization.

“Farmers and ranchers depend on rural roads, highways and bridges for daily life and to move their products to market,” said Zippy Duvall, the president of the American Farm Bureau Federation, in a press release.

With [New Mexico's oil industry booming](#), there's more activity in some rural areas, wearing down roads faster. Poor road conditions can create problems for workers and travelers. Vehicle operating costs, crashes due to poor road conditions and delays in time are all on the rise because of New Mexico roads, according to a [TRIP report](#) on New Mexico transportation. TRIP estimated that 30% of New Mexico rural pavements are in poor condition and 6% of New Mexico rural bridges are structurally deficient.

"Roads and bridges that are deteriorated, congested or lack some desirable safety features cost New Mexico drivers a total of \$2.7 billion annually – as much as \$2,058 per driver in some areas," TRIP said in a

previous report in February. TRIP is a nonprofit organization based in Washington D.C. that researches and distributes data about transportation and surface conditions throughout the country.

The New Mexico [FY 2020 Executive Budget Recommendation](#) estimates that the cost to pave a mile of road is \$2 million. The state has \$3 billion worth of unfunded transportation projects, according to the New Mexico Department of Transportation. Some of these projects could potentially improve safety and accommodate the rise in oilfield traffic. Of those projects, more than \$1 billion would be needed for road repair throughout New Mexico.

The oil boom helped the state to [a-once-in-a-decade surplus of more than \\$1 billion](#). In April, Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham signed a \$7 billion budget plan that allowed [\\$389 million](#) for roads and highways, transportation maintenance projects and infrastructure funding, according to the Santa Fe New Mexican.

See what other states were ranked as having poor rural road conditions in the accompanying slideshow.

### 10 states ranked as having the worst rural road conditions

- 10 - New Hampshire
- 9 - Maine
- 8- Alaska
- 7- Mississippi
- 6- Oklahoma
- 5 - Hawaii
- 4- West Virginia
- 3- New Mexico
- 2- California
1. Rhode Island