Report: Area bridges in better shape than state average

By Bob Clark | Special to the Press

According to the latest data available from the DOT online, 27 of 480 bridges in Cattaraugus County were rated as poor, or 5.63%. The vast majority of bridges in the county are owned by the state through the DOT or Allegany State Park Authority; or by the county. Only a handful are owned at the municipal level.

The oldest poor condition bridge is the Baxter Mill Road bridge over Ischua Creek in the town of Ischua. The bridge was constructed in 1893. The oldest still-serving bridge in the county, however, is in better condition. The Farwell Road bridge over Ischua Creek was built in 1891. The newest bridge to be marked in poor condition is the Main Street bridge over the Allegheny River in Salamanca, rebuilt in 1990. An October 2017 inspection classified the bridge as in poor condition.

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“On behalf of our more than 900 town highway superintendents we’d like to thank TRIP for its excellent work highlighting the need for increased funding to stabilize the condition of our state and local bridges,” said town of Denmark highway superintendent Patrick Mahar, president of the New York State Association of Town Superintendents of Highways. “We commend Governor Cuomo and our state legislators for investing over $450 million in local bridges through the Bridge-NY program. But significant increases are needed in this and other local infrastructure programs to ensure New Yorkers don’t have to continue to drive over deficient bridges.”

“Maintaining safe and stable infrastructure is critically important to all New Yorkers. Every day, millions of people travel through our state on what are often poor and structurally deficient roads and bridges,” said state Sen. Tim Kennedy, chairman of the Senate Committee on Transportation. “Now more than ever we need to ensure that we’re dedicating resources to local infrastructure that is desperately in need of repair and maintenance. Taxpayer dollars must be put to work to improve our local community. I will continue to work with local stakeholders and continue to fight for additional funding to improve our roads and bridges.”

Cattaraugus County Department of Public Works Commissioner Kathleen Ellis could not be reached for comment.