

WEST VIRGINIA HEADLINES

West Virginia's interstates named some of the worst, but not for long



by: [Kathryn Ghion](#)

OHIO COUNTY, W.Va. ([WTRF](#)) – It keeps the country connected, but it also takes a beating. The U.S. Interstate Highway System turns 65-years-old this year, but the millions of miles traveled on it are taking a toll, especially in West Virginia.

The Mountain State's interstates are among the worst in the country, but that may not be the case for long.

"Most of our interstate system is about the same age.

- **TONY CLARK, DISTRICT 6 ENGINEER, WVDOH**

65-years of cars, trucks and West Virginia weather are taking a toll on the interstates and bridges.

"13% are in either are in poor or structurally deficient condition. What that means is that there's significant deterioration to the major components of the bridge. These bridges are still safe to travel on.

- **CAROLYN KELLY, DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH & COMMUNICATION, TRIP**

A new report by the national transportation research nonprofit TRIP found that while the bridges are in bad shape, so is the pavement.

The 13% of bridges in bad shape means West Virginia has the highest rate of bridges in poor or structurally deficient conditions. Three-percent of the interstate's paved roads are in poor condition as well.

However, they also factored in major improvements being made with Roads to Prosperity projects across the state. TRIP said that West Virginia's \$1.6 billion in investments into the interstate means conditions won't be one of the worst for long.

"The next time this report comes out, if we're on the bottom again it's because everybody else has brought their game up as well and I don't think we'll be on the bottom again.

TONY CLARK, DISTRICT 6 ENGINEER, WVDOH

The Northern Panhandle is in a unique position when it comes to correcting the wear and tear. Major bridge upgrades, specifically on I-70 are well under way because of the state's investment.

"This big headache for a very, relatively small-time frame is better in my opinion than continually working on bridges for the next 15 years.

- **TONY CLARK, DISTRICT 6 ENGINEER, WVDOH**

Clark said without Roads to Prosperity, all the congestion drivers in the Ohio Valley see on I-70 right now would have lasted much longer because the repairs would of had to be done in pieces.

TRIP said it's not all up to the states to fund the repairs.

"Funding for the interstate would need to more than double in order to meet the needs and to address all the needed improvements.

- **CAROLYN KELLY, DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH & COMMUNICATION, TRIP**

Reports used to compile the TRIP data found more help needs to come from the federal level as Congress continues to try and compromise on an infrastructure bill.

"Money obviously is what the federal government can do, but also making sure that we have a special set aside principally for bridges I think will be especially helpful to West Virginia.

- **SENATOR SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO, (R) WEST VIRGINIA**

Senator Joe Manchin agrees.

"I always say that a pothole doesn't care if you're a Democrat or Republican, it'll bust your tire either way. That's why I'm working with my bipartisan colleagues on a reasonable, bipartisan infrastructure package that addresses the needs of our nation, including West Virginia's crumbling roads and bridges.

- **SENATOR JOE MANCHIN, (D) WEST VIRGINIA**

The Department of Highways explained simply paving the interstate is just like putting a band-aid on the problem. That's why drivers will see larger projects that really address to the structural issues, but in some cases that means more detours and orange cones temporarily impeding your travel.

As far as the surrounding states go, Ohio also had three-percent of interstate pavement in poor condition. In Pennsylvania, it's five-percent. Pennsylvania also made the list for the worst interstate bridges with four-percent of the state's structures in bad shape.