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ROUGH ROADS COSTING MICHIGANDERS THOUSANDS

It's no secret to drivers that Michigan's roads need work, but a new report puts a dollar amount on how much it's costing drivers in repair bills.

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MID-MICHIGAN (WNEM) - It's no secret to drivers that Michigan's roads need work, but a new report puts a dollar amount on how much it's costing drivers in repair bills.

For people in Bay, Midland, and Saginaw counties, it's \$1,884 a year.

The report published by TRIP - a national transportation research group - shows Michigan is using additional state and federal transportation funding to improve roads.

But there is a gap, and it's huge.

"If you want to fix the local roads, one way to do it is to do it ourselves," said Dan Armentrout, the deputy director of the Saginaw County Road Commission.

And that's why Armentrout advocates for millages to keep roads smooth for drivers.

He spoke out after a new report surveying road conditions in the state.

It noted a fuel tax increase in 2017 to 26 cents helps bring close to \$350 million annually, but it's not nearly enough.

"State still faces an annual \$3.9 billion gap in funding needed to maintain and make needed improvements," said Rocky Moretti, director of policy and research at TRIP.

According to the report, 39% of major locally and state-maintained roads in the Tri-County area are in poor condition.

For drivers, that means about \$1,800 dollars in repairs.

Armentrout said the problem extends further.

"The local road system though, those secondary roads, those sub-division streets, still the funding for those is very small," he said.

He said those roads make up close to 75% of road systems in the area.

Things are even worse in Flint with more than half of local and state maintained roads in poor condition.

In Flint drivers are losing, on average, \$2,100 a year.

Armentrout said the challenge with the funding provided comes when they have to find a 50% match from another source. Oftentimes that comes in the form of millages which can be difficult to sell in some areas.

"So sparse, so rare. It's just tough. Some townships have millages," he said.

In recent years, looming inflation has made improvements more expensive.

"In 2022 and 2023, we've seen a 43% increase in inflation, in the cost of highway construction and repair," Moretti said.

Armentrout believes millages can do more good for communities than seeking and waiting for state or federal funding.

"The dollars raised in your community are spent in your community on roads that your community leaders say, 'These are our priorities,'" he said.

Saginaw County does have a countywide road millage proposal in the Aug. 6 primary election.

For more information from the report, click [here](#).