



View from the Chair

Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission

MoDOT Issues Dire Warning

January 16, 2015



Dear «GreetingLine»

“A Dire Warning For Missouri Roadways” – that was the headline in the *Kansas City Star* that I awoke to yesterday morning. Let’s hope that the potential consequence of inadequate transportation funding is a wakeup call to all Missourians.

At Wednesday’s Commission meeting, MoDOT Director Dave Nichols laid out “Missouri’s 325 System,” MoDOT’s proposed plan for living within a \$325 million construction budget by 2017. I call it “transportation triage.” Just as emergency personnel responding to a disaster must identify those in most critical need, MoDOT has had to identify the most critical components of a very large system of roads and bridges. MoDOT has determined that the core function of the highway system is to connect communities across the state. Those highways, comprising approximately 8,000 miles, will receive primary attention. All 114 counties and most communities with a population of 1,000 will be served by a primary road.

Director Nichols reported that it will take every penny of the \$325 million available for contractor awards to keep those 8,000 miles in good condition. Capital improvements, such as asphalt overlays responsible for a smooth ride, will only be made on the primary system. These capital improvements, however, will not include expansion to the system, safety upgrades and economic development projects the public has come to expect. It will take the \$325 million just to preserve the status quo. And, that is no small task. On the primary system alone there are more than 100 bridges in poor or serious condition that need to be replaced.

Only limited routine maintenance will be performed on supplementary roads and bridges – the other 26,000 miles on the state highway system. For instance, instead of scheduled overlays these roads may receive only pothole repairs and patching. Currently 74 percent of these supplemental roads are in good condition, but it is estimated that only 27 percent will be in good

condition in 10 years. And, the 26 percent in poor condition today may more resemble gravel than a paved road.

Further, there are currently 483 bridges in poor or serious condition on the supplementary roads. In ten years, that number will grow to more than 1,400. It is anticipated that approximately 90 of these bridges will be closed over that time and still others will be subject to weight restrictions.

MoDOT will keep its commitment to preserve the primary system which is essential to the life blood of the state – but for all of us who use MoDOT roads for our local traffic – there are bumpy roads ahead.

If you would like to communicate with the Commission, you can always reach us at MHTC@modot.mo.gov.

Onward!

Stephen R. Miller
Chairman

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