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## **Funding Secured for New Rail Overpass on Highway 19**

MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MO – The Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) recently announced a decision to construct an overpass on Highway 19 near New Florence that will eliminate a dangerous curve and low-clearance railroad bridge. Scheduled for construction in 2015, the over \$6 million project is included in MoDOT's recently approved 2013-2017 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

The project was considered a priority for local officials and the Greater Montgomery County Economic Development Council (GMCEDC) as the current route is viewed as a threat to the safety of travelers and to the future development of the region. "While working to both support existing businesses and recruit new employers, we are consistently confronted by this obstacle and we have been working for years to find a solution," said Brent Speight, President of GMCEDC. "We are very thankful for the efforts of MoDOT, our area elected officials, Boonslick Regional Planning Commission and all area residents who attended meetings and wrote letters of support leading up to this great announcement."

"This is wonderful news for Montgomery County and all communities north along Highway 19," read a statement from the Montgomery County Commissioners. "The economic impact of this project has made it a priority of the Commission for quite some time and we are excited to see the funding obstacle finally removed."

The existing single rail line bridge was built in 1934 and is owned by Norfolk Southern. The current underpass for vehicles is not up to today's standards, with a height clearance of 13' 8" and a width opening of 30'. The average daily traffic along this portion of Highway 19 is over 5,000 vehicles, over 20% of which is truck traffic.

"This project has been a long time in coming. We are very pleased that it is finally on the books to develop," said John Burroughs, Mayor of New Florence. "Crossing over the railroad trestle is a good thing. This crossing is 78 years old. An overpass across the trestle will be well received by Montgomery County."

Partnering with Boonslick Regional Planning Commission, who previously secured \$2.25 million in Community Development Block Grant funding for the project; MoDOT's share of the cost is around \$3.75 million. "Route 19 is an important link for I-70 travelers wanting to access the Montgomery County area, recreational areas near Mark Twain Lake and tourist attractions in towns such as Hannibal," said MoDOT Area Engineer, Erik Maninga. "The overpass needs to be replaced due to its height and width restrictions to accommodate economic development in the area. It has been great working with Boonslick Regional Planning Commission to partner on this project."

Information on the 2013-2017 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program is available on MoDOT's web site, [www.modot.org](http://www.modot.org), and at MoDOT district and regional offices.

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