



Talkin'

Cape Girardeau County

TRANSPORTATION

October 2008

Route 34/72

There are still more improvements in store for Route 34/72, although some of the work has been completed. About 40 percent of the paving work is finished, and traffic has already been shifted to the newly paved area.

Also, the bridge is nearing completion, with only guardrail left to be installed.

Work is still underway at Starlight intersection, with contractors performing grading work. This is one of the preliminary steps for the paving work that will take place to widen the roadway in this area.

Once completed, the roadway will be paved in concrete with an asphalt shoulder.

As these improvements continue, MoDOT encourages motorists to read message boards along the route for up-to-date travel information. Drivers are urged to use extreme caution in the work zones.

For more information, contact Resident Engineer Darius Dowdy at (673) 243-0899 or call MoDOT's Customer Service Center toll-free at 1-888-ASK MODOT (1-888-257-6636).

Bridge Replacements

With all of the right-of-way purchased for the Byrd Creek and Whitewater River bridge project, bidding should open to contractors in November.

The project includes replacing both of the bridges. Replacement is necessary because both of the bridges are aging and narrow.

MoDOT anticipates the contract to be awarded by the end

of the year, with construction beginning in 2009.

Once construction begins, traffic will be detoured over a temporary bypass along the north side of Route 72.

"When completed, the Byrd Creek bridge improvement should also help reduce the frequency of flood waters covering Route 72," said Project Manager Tim Richmond.

Guard Cable on I-55

You've likely seen the work to install high-tension guard cable in the median along the southbound side of I-55 from Oak Ridge to Sikeston. Contractors began on the north end of the project and have completed drilling the holes for posts in the first eight miles.

Concrete is being poured into the holes to serve as a foundation for the posts. As concrete is poured, lane closures on the inside southbound lanes will be necessary. This phase of the project is expected to be complete by the end of October.

Once this is complete, the installation of the posts and guard cable will begin. The guard cable installation is expected to be complete by the end of the year.

The guard cable will serve as a cost-effective safety barrier by reducing the severity of crashes and by providing emergency responders with protection.



Law enforcement and local officials show support of guard cable installation by attending the Guard Cable Safety Celebration.

Statewide, guard cable has stopped more than 95 percent of vehicles that enter the median before they cross into opposing traffic.

To celebrate the installation of the guard cable in the Southeast, a special I-55 Guard Cable Safety Celebration was recently held in Cape Girardeau.

A Conversation for Moving Missouri Forward

During the last several years, Missourians have invested in transportation, and MoDOT has made great progress with that investment.

We used Amendment 3 money to make 2,200 miles of the state's busiest highways smoother and safer in just two years, sped up 55 critical highway projects and moved ahead with \$1.6 billion in new construction. This work has created jobs – an average of more than 7,500 a year – and saved lives.

Missouri led the nation in saving lives in 2006 when 161 fewer people were killed on our highways.

Missouri has gone from having the third worst pavement on major roads to an estimated ninth best.

Seventy-eight percent of the state's major roads are now in good condition. Missouri ranks 13th in the nation in overall performance of the state highway system in one year. And, we did that with the fourth lowest administrative costs per mile in the nation.

All that being said, there are tough times ahead. We're your transportation expert, and we must prepare Missouri for what faces us. This year we have a \$1.23 billion construction program. In 2010 – we'll have \$569 million construction program.

Why? With the passage of Amendment 3, voters directed MoDOT to sell bonds and use the money for highway construction. The new revenue from Amendment 3 is being used to pay off those bonds over time. The money MoDOT

received from selling the bonds will be used up in 2010 and state funds available for highway maintenance and construction will return to pre-Amendment 3 levels. Funding levels are further jeopardized by decreasing federal aid and increasing construction, maintenance and fuel costs.

The first step in any funding discussion must answer, "What will we get if we give more money?" We've used input from our partners at the regional planning

commissions to determine a plan of action to move Missouri forward.

This is the direction we think Missouri should move, but we want to know what you think. We want to start a conversation about what should be the plan if more funding becomes available. We think the Top Five Priorities should be:

1) First, take care of our roads and bridges – improve less traveled roads; maintain heavily traveled roads; repair or replace 20 of our worst big bridges and get 90 percent of other bridges in good condition.

Eighty percent of travel in Missouri takes place on heavily traveled highways and more than 90 percent of all Missourians live within 10 miles of these heavily traveled roads

Everyone we talk to tells us they want us to improve our less

traveled roads. Our next step would be to take 4,500 miles of the busiest of these roads and make them better and safer. We'd give them improved pavement, paved shoulders, rumble stripes and bigger signs. The rest of the less traveled roads – about 22,000 miles – would get better surfaces. And, we'd like to repair or replace our 20 worst big bridges.

2) Next, we need to do a better job of providing other ways to get around – provide

additional funding for passenger rail, ports and public transit. We need

to be a department of transportation; that means more than roads and bridges. We have to help people get where they want to go without driving a car.

We also need to get some of the freight off of our highways. Did you know one rail car equals 4.5 trucks? And one barge equals 16 rail cars or 70 trucks?

3) We also need to rebuild Interstates 70 and 44 – add car lanes and dedicated truck lanes. They aren't in Southeast Missouri, but they are Missouri's two busiest highways, and they are worn out, congested and need to be replaced. They were designed to carry 12,000 cars a day; today 25 million miles a day are driven on I-70 and I-44.

4) We need to tackle needed major projects – Partners gave us a list of about 100 projects totaling \$15 billion and we have pared the public's wish list down to 46 key projects. In our neck of the woods that includes finishing Route 67 south of Poplar Bluff into Arkansas and improvements on Route 34.

5) We also need to meet regional needs – increase funding for cost-share and flexible fund programs to help meet regional needs. The flexible fund program allows regions to address priorities and cost-share lets us split costs with communities to get the job done.

This is just the start of the conversation because to deliver all these improvements will cost a little more than \$1.5 billion a year for 20 years. That's based on 2008 costs and doesn't factor in inflation.

We will have a little more than \$600 million a year during that time. That leaves quite a gap – nearly \$1 billion a year.

This is why we want to talk. What does Missouri want from a transportation system? What's right with the plan? What should be included? What ideas do you have? We want to hear your thoughts. We want to share this information with as many people as possible. We'd be happy to talk to any groups or organizations interested. By no means are these priorities written in stone. This is a start ... please tell us what you think.

We invite you to offer your input at modot.org/conversation or contact us at 1-888-ASK-MODOT (1-888-275-6636) to schedule a speaker.

