



Work Zone
Safety
Route 61

Minor
Routes,
Major
Routes



Talkin'

Perry County

TRANSPORTATION

June 2008

I-55 Work Continues

Work is well underway on I-55 in Perry County. The entire project includes work on the northbound lane from Biehle to Perryville.

Milling operations began in late May and reduced traffic to one lane as the contractor prepared the pavement for resurfacing following the undersealing. Before resurfacing began, the pavement actually appeared rougher to drivers.

“The undersealing process lifts portions of the pavement slabs, leading to a rougher ride temporarily, but

that’s necessary before resurfacing can be completed to smooth the pavement,” said Project Manager Eric Krapf.

Despite weather delays, paving of I-55 in Perry County is still scheduled to begin in early June. The improvements should be completed by the end of the year.

The Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission awarded the contract to APAC-Missouri, Inc., Columbia, Mo. The entire project will cost a total of \$3,210,080.

Motorists are encouraged to use

caution when traveling through the work zones as the improvements are being made.



STIP Draft Includes Perry County Projects

A draft of the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program for 2009 – 2013 has been released and is available for public comment. The STIP lists all transportation projects planned by state and regional planning agencies for the next five fiscal years.

Some of the newly identified projects are set to occur in Perry County.

One of the projects is to rehabilitate the bridge over the Mississippi River at Chester. Additional funding in the amount of \$500,000 will be provided by the State of Illinois to make the improvements.

Pavement improvements are also part of MoDOT’s plan for Route 61 from Jackson in Cape Girardeau County to Bloomsdale in Ste. Genevieve County.

“We used an extensive public involvement process to develop this program and have worked with our planning partners from communities around the state to identify and prioritize the new projects,” said MoDOT Director Pete Rahn.

The STIP became available for public review on May 14 and is open for review until June 27. After June 27, the comments will be presented to the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission. The comments and proposed program will be reviewed and considered for approval on July 2.

The STIP draft may be accessed at modot.org or at any of MoDOT’s district offices around the state. Citizens interested in offering comments may call MoDOT’s customer service centers at 1-888-ASK-MODOT (275-6636).

Route 61 Improvements Begin This Fall

MoDOT will begin work this fall to resurface and improve shoulders from Bloomsdale to Jackson on Route 61.

The majority of the project will focus on resurfacing the route and paving the three-foot shoulders. Rumble strips will also be installed. Rumble strips are grooves cut into the pavement to alert drivers they are leaving their lane.

Work should start in the north end and run south. The project has an approximate length of 67 miles. MoDOT expects work to be completed by fall 2009.

Route 61 improvements are a result of an April STIP amendment. A draft of the STIP including this project is currently available for public review and may be accessed at modot.org/ or at any of MoDOT’s district offices.

Why Does MoDOT Do That?

More Work To Major Roads, Less Work To Letter Routes, & Lives Saved

By MoDOT Southeast District Engineer Mark Shelton

Fatalities from traffic crashes in Missouri are down dramatically from 1,257 in 2005 to 992 for 2007. Before we get lost in those numbers and statistics, let's put it in real terms we can each relate to. In two years, almost 283 fewer precious lives were lost on our roadways. That's nearly 300 lives—mothers, fathers, children, grandparents, coworkers, friends—saved. While one is too many to lose, knowing that 300 were saved is not simply rewarding, it's heartwarming.

The last time Missouri's traffic fatalities were that low was 15 years ago. So, why the reduction now? MoDOT has made traffic fatality reduction a mission. We've partnered with law enforcement and increased our educational outreach efforts. But, I think what has played a bigger role than anything else are two programs the department has undertaken over the last several years: Smooth Roads Initiative and Better Roads Brighter Future.

These programs were created in part to address something else we can all relate to: many needs, little funds. Just like families across Missouri, MoDOT had to take a hard look and make tough decisions with the state's many pressing transportation needs and what little money was available to address those. SRI and BRBF were the solution.

Because we couldn't address all the needs, we decided to focus on the best value—the roads that were most traveled, nearest the most people, touched the most lives. SRI was made possible because Missourians approved Amendment 3 in 2004. MoDOT completed SRI, smoothing 2,200 miles of the state's most heavily traveled roads in 2006—one year ahead of schedule. BRBF continued that quest by bringing another 3,300 miles of roads to good condition, adding wider, brighter stripes, edgeline

and center rumblestripes, and paved shoulders on two-lane roads over the next four years. Like SRI, BRBF targets heavily traveled highways. These roads carry 80 percent of all traffic on the state highway system and 95 percent of Missourians live within 10 miles of one of these roads. As a result of our focus two things have occurred.

First, the lesser-traveled routes have certainly not gotten much attention. If you live on one of those roads, you know what I mean. Our crews have done their best to patch and seal the roads with lower traffic volumes, but they've seen little additional improvements. I mentioned tough decisions earlier, and this is a prime example. Folks who live on lesser-traveled routes want improvements just like those near heavily traveled routes. But the bottom line is we cannot make all the improvements that we would like to or that you would like us to. MoDOT wants a transportation system we can be proud of, but the mon-

ey for all our needs just isn't there. So, we have focused our efforts on making the that reach as many improvements we can afford Missouri as possible, which brings us to the second result.

The reduction in traffic fatalities can be attributed to the improvements and engineering advances as part of SRI and BRBF. We made safety improvements to roads carrying the most traffic, and we saw fewer traffic fatalities. Now, Missouri will never be accident-free. There are too many variables. But, it only stands to reason that if you want to reduce fatalities that you focus on where most of the traffic is. It isn't easy. It doesn't please everyone. I hope that one day Missouri has enough funding to adequately address all of our transportation

needs. But right now, we must make those tough decisions. It is MoDOT's obligation to make our highways as safe as possible and our mission to reduce traffic fatalities. In essence, fatality means death, and while it may not be the most pleasing strategy to all, I feel confident in a plan that has reduced deaths of Missourians by 24 percent in two years.



Safety measures help state to reduce highway fatalities to a 14-year low

By Ken Leiser
ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Highway deaths dropped 11 percent in 2007
and Amos Bridges
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