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Marathon County Next Stop on Rough Road Tour

Area officials get on bus to experience region's road and bridge woes

(Wausau, WI) – The condition of Wisconsin roads has caught the public's attention. Unfortunately, no long-term solution for the state's transportation challenges was reached in the last state budget. Meanwhile, poor roads and deficient bridges continue to frustrate drivers and businesses with increased vehicle repairs and lost time.

The Rough Road Tour continued this morning, Wednesday, June 27, with Marathon County and central Wisconsin officials taking the media on a bus to experience firsthand the region's aging roads and outdated bridges.

The goal of the Rough Road Tour is to bring attention to the condition of Wisconsin transportation infrastructure, which includes state and local roads and bridges, as well as the impact on local communities.

"Today's event is the third stop on the Rough Road Tour and a continuation of the **Just Fix It** campaign which has sought to educate and engage the public regarding the rough road we face," commented TDA Executive Director Craig Thompson.

"We are better than this," Thompson continued. "Other states are stepping forward to invest in their infrastructure, and so can we."

The Marathon County Rough Road Tour bounced through parts of Marathon County, showing just a sample of the area's road conditions and needs.

One of the tour stops was in the Village of Weston, the fastest growing community in Marathon County. As part of that growth, the village is working to develop a 320-acre project called Camp Phillips Centre that may be worth \$150 million and create 4,000 jobs. The project is located at the intersection of Highway 29 and Camp Phillips Road (County Highway X).

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“County Road X, the Wausau Urbanized Area’s principal eastern arterial, is in bad condition and also needs safety, capacity, and alignment, improvements on a 2-mile stretch within the Village of Weston,” explained Keith Donner, director of public works for the Village of Weston.

“Improving this section of road will be vital to the Camp Phillips Centre and the economic development it will bring.”

Meeting the infrastructure needs of growing areas is not the only challenge local officials face. As an example, the Marathon County Highway Department is currently responsible for monitoring and maintaining 48 structurally deficient bridges, almost three times the average for Wisconsin counties.

The estimated cost to replace these structurally deficient bridges is approaching \$30 million.

“Marathon County strives to keep our bridges within the county at a high level of service, but it is becoming harder to stay ahead of deteriorating structures,” said Jim Griesbach, Marathon County highway commissioner. “We have been fortunate to receive some state aid; however, it is only enough to fund 15% of our needs.

“The current state/federal funding system is inadequate, resulting in more local dollars being used to maintain our bridges,” Griesbach concluded. “With limited dollars, this means something else doesn’t get done.”

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Logo and graphics are available at: <http://www.tdawisconsin.org/marathoncoroughroadtour/>.

About TDA

From the buses in Racine to the Port of Green Bay to the rail lines in Superior to the Waukesha County Airport to the roads we use every day, Wisconsin’s transportation network is the key to connecting goods to market and people to jobs.

Founded in 1971, the Transportation Development Association of Wisconsin promotes the vitality and safety of the state’s transportation system, including public transit systems, public-use and general aviation airports, railroads, commercial ports, and roads. TDA’s members comprise business, labor, units of government, regional planning organizations, as well as individuals.

Contact us at: www.tdawisconsin.org and Twitter handle @TDWisconsin