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TRANSPORTATION CONNECTIONS

A publication of the Meramec Regional Planning Commission
Transportation Advisory Committee



Representing Crawford, Dent, Gasconade, Maries, Osage, Phelps, Pulaski and Washington Counties



Winter 2016

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Section of Route 21 designated as Travel Safe Zone

The Missouri Department of Transportation has designated a 14.5-mile stretch of Missouri Route 21 in Washington County as a Travel Safe Zone, effective Jan. 1, 2016.

Twelve signs noting the Travel Safe Zone have been installed along the route, with enforcement beginning Jan. 1, 2016. The zone runs from the Washington/Jefferson County line to Potosi city limits just south of Route E.

A Travel Safe Zone is an area where fines for moving operation violations are doubled to discourage unsafe driving practices, such as speeding, inattention and aggressive driving.

So far this year, two people have died and three have suffered disabling injuries on this stretch of Route 21, which is hilly and curvy with many driveway entrances. From 2009 to 2014, 10 people were killed, 35 suffered serious injuries and 147 received minor injuries. The five year average of severe crashes for this section of Route 21 is about 18, while the statewide average for a two-lane, numbered route is approximately 7.

"The severe crash rate on Route 21 is almost three times higher than the statewide average," said MoDOT's Central District Traffic Engineer Trent Brooks.



Potosi Mayor T.R. Dudley presents his county's priorities to TAC members at the Dec. 10 board meeting.

TAC decides regional transportation priorities

The Meramec Region's Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) decided the expansions of Highways 63 and 50 to four-lane corridors remain the number one and two regional transportation priorities, respectively, at the Dec. 10 meeting.

The TAC also prioritized a list of 24 transportation needs from the eight counties to be added to the future State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP).

The initial list of 24 additional projects was created as the representatives of each county presented that county's top three priorities. All TAC members then prioritized those projects through a weighted voting system.

The TAC's top 10 priorities after highways 63 and 50 are:

1. Replacement of bridge over Cedar Creek on Route 32 in Washington County;
2. Replacement of bridge over Crooked Creek on Highway 19 in Crawford County;
3. Extending Highway 63 to I-44 University Drive and overpass at I-44, Rolla, Phelps County;
4. Safety improvements to Highway 63 and MO 133 intersection in Osage County;
5. Safety improvements and expansion to entire Route 42 through Maries County;
6. Safety improvements and expansion on geometrics and add shoulders for the entire length of MO 68 to Route 8 in Phelps County to Dent County;
7. Safety improvements at the S-curve near Beaumont Road on Highway 17, 1.9 miles north

People commuting to St. Louis are some of the more frequent users of this designated roadway section. Aggressive driving, inattention, failing to yield, driving while impaired and driving on the wrong side of the road were the top reasons for the accidents.

"We're hoping people will make better driving decisions as a result of the Travel Safe Zone designation," Brooks said.

The Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety's Central Region, the Washington County Commission and the Meramec Regional Planning Commission supported the Travel Safe Zone designation. MoDOT will review the designation periodically to determine its effectiveness.

McKenna selected as new transportation director Dec. 7



Patrick McKenna was selected Dec. 7 to be the new director of the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT).

Patrick K. McKenna, formerly of New Hampshire, accepted the position as the new director of the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) on Dec. 7.

McKenna, who previously served as Deputy Commissioner of the New Hampshire Department of Transportation, will serve as MoDOT's chief financial, operating and legislative officer for the organization.

Along with a Bachelor's of Science degree in finance from Bentley University and a Master's of Science in management and finance from University of Maryland University College, McKenna's qualifications also included leadership positions in public, private, non-profit sectors and several years as the sole proprietor of a real estate holding company.

He replaces Interim Director Roberta Broeker, who will return to her previous position as MoDOT's chief financial officer.

Enterprise Car Sales, Mobility Management program working to bring reliable transportation to the Meramec Region

of Crocker at Beaumont Road in Pulaski County;

8. Replacement of bridge over Holt Creek on Route F in Dent County;

9. Improve intersection and lighting over Route Y and St. Robert Boulevard intersection in Pulaski County; and

10. Replacement of Bridge over Crooked Creek on Route TT in Dent County.

The prioritized list will be sent to MoDOT for consideration in the STIP, which is updated annually and sets forth specific construction projects MoDOT will undertake in the next five years. It covers all modes of transportation.

"We always use the prioritization process as guidance when determining what to add to the STIP," said Preston Kramer, MoDOT area engineer. "The new director and commission have not yet given us guidance as to what types of projects we can bring in, but I suspect they will stick to bridges and pavements only."

No new projects were added to STIP in 2014-16. Although funds have not yet been allocated to the Central District for the 2017 fiscal year, additions to the STIP are expected in 2017.

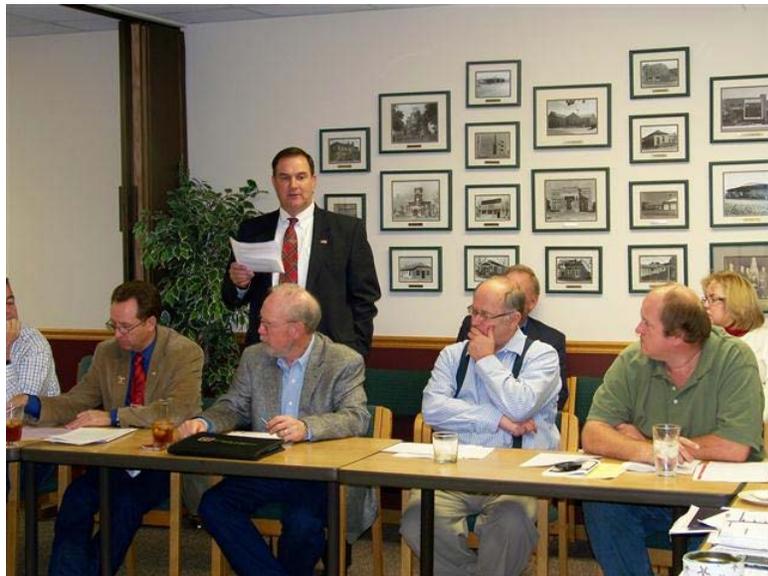
The TAC also prioritized the 325 Eligible Primary System Needs. Missouri's 325 plan identifies roads as primary routes or supplemental routes and is MoDOT's proposed plan for living within a \$325 million construction budget, which is the amount of funds Missouri would have for contracted transportation projects if the state could not match federal funds.

MRPC Executive Director Bonnie Prigge provided a summary of the region's 14 needs that qualify on the 325 primary roads. Afterwards, TAC members prioritized those needs.

The top three 325 primary road needs are:

- Replacement of Bridge over Cedar Creek MO 32 in Washington County;
- Expansion to the road shoulders from MO 8 to MO 68 at the Crawford County line in Phelps County; and
- Safety improvements to MO 42 for functional safety needs on the entire route through Maries County.

Persons needing more information on MRPC's Transportation Advisory Committee may contact MRPC at 573-265-2993. The group will meet again in February 2016.



Sen. Mike Kehoe (above) addresses MRPC board members about their regional transportation concerns.

MRPC board decides regional transportation priorities at the Dec. 10 meeting

The Meramec Regional Planning Commission board included regional transportation needs it considers important in a legislative priorities list they presented to Sen. Dan Brown, Sen. Mike Kehoe, Rep. Jason Chipman and Rep. Steve Lynch at the Dec. 10 board meeting.

The list included the top transportation priorities for 2016, as voted by MRPC board members, are:

- In regional transportation: Based on safety, economic development and quality of life issues, MRPC encourages the legislature to explore all options of state and federal funding to effectively address transportation project needs and develop a long term funding solution through taxes and fees. Furthermore, should construction funds become available, MRPC



Matt Madura (back), Senior Business Rental Sales Executive with Enterprise Car Sales, and Holly Kreienkamp, MRPC Mobility Manager, met Dec. 17 to discuss partnering their programs to bring more transportation options into the region.

Enterprise Car Sales Executive Matt Madura met with Meramec Regional Planning Commission's Mobility Manger Holly Kreienkamp on Dec. 17 to discuss how the company and program may provide transportation in the Meramec Region.

"Enterprise currently offers a ride-share program," Madura said. "The program brings people together who work at a common place or near a common place to save resources, emissions and insurance."

Ride sharing, also known as vanpooling, allows people who don't have a vehicle or don't have an economical vehicle to share a resource. There must be at least two people over the age of 25 to coordinate rides and participants only need participate 50 percent of the time.

"The Enterprise ride-share program would easily fit in with Mobility Management and could apply to workplace travel, doctor's visits and grocery shopping," Kreienkamp said.

Currently ride-share programs are big in metro areas and around factories with multiple shifts. The program has already been working for nearly 20 years under Enterprise.

"It's just a matter of getting people interested and together. They can form a van pool within three weeks," Madura said.

For more information about transportation opportunities, contact Kreienkamp at 573-265-2993, hkreienkamp@meramecregion.org or visit the website at www.morides.org.

How MoDOT plows snow

There are 34,000 miles of state highways to cover when winter weather hits, so MoDOT has to set priorities on which roads to clear first.

In addition, each winter storm is different, and tools, materials and practices are adjusted accordingly.

Priorities for plowing snow and ice on Missouri highways include:

Returning interstates and major roads to near-normal driving conditions as soon as possible after a storm ends.

Treating hills, curves and intersections on lower-volume routes, such as numbered and lettered highways.

Clearing high-volume roads, then focus on the lower-volume routes, such as numbered and lettered highways. After clearing high-volume roads, continue to the lower-volume highways passable for two-lane traffic.

Interstates and Major Roads Plowed to "Mostly

encourages the development of statewide corridors and supports the four-laning of Highway 63 from Arkansas to Iowa and Highway 50.



Water rushes over road and bridge on State Route 63 near Vienna.

MoDOT expects minimal road damage as flood waters recede

Heavy rainfall that began Dec. 26 exceeded previous regional flood records in some areas and left the Meramec Region with some impassable bridges and road closures, said MoDOT Area Engineer Preston Kramer.

"The flooding hasn't been too bad in our area, but there were many closures," Kramer said. "At peak water levels, 285 roads were closed statewide."

Counties in the Meramec region, including Crawford, Dent, Maries, Gasconade, Phelps, Pulaski, Washington and Osage were affected by the Gasconade, Missouri, Bourbeuse and Meramec rivers.

"Our region was most impacted at I-44 and Jerome, as the water from the Gasconade reached higher flood levels than the flood of 2013," Kramer said. "Since the water was from the Gasconade River, it didn't take long to recede."

Flood levels in Jerome peaked at 3:45 p.m. Dec. 29 at 31.92 ft. I-44 at Jerome also flooded in 2009-10, 2013 and 2015. MoDOT has discussed raising the road four or five feet or adding an outer road to decrease flooding. Costs for either project were estimated at around \$30 million. MoDOT does not have plans to take action on either one of the potential projects.

Other roads in the region, including U.S. Highway 63 at Vienna, U.S. Highway 50 at Mount Sterling, required some shoulder maintenance before re-opening to traffic. For a while, all Gasconade River crossings in Phelps, Maries, Osage and Gasconade counties were closed at the same time.

Travelers were rerouted to alternative routes due to road closures, which caused more damage to roadways that already needed repairs or were not designed to accommodate high traffic. U.S. Highway 63 through Rolla was used as an alternative route and portions of the highway that were already in bad shape sustained minor damages.

"Throwing 3,000 extra vehicles on a highway already in bad shape isn't good, but Rolla adjusted for the extra traffic," Kramer said.

Traffic signals were adjusted to allow more time for interstate-bound traffic to move through. Signal times have since returned to normal.

"We will continue to clean everything up," Kramer said. "The only other crossings that sustained damage and are expected to remain closed until repairs may be made are Route C in Phelps County, where a previous low water bridge had been in the process of being replaced, and the bridge by Morrison and Route 100, where a section of the roadway was washed out."

Kramer said all other roads and structures appear to be in working condition, but will be assessed more closely this week. Maintenance crews will repair minor damages or contact engineers if repairs are beyond their expertise.

"MoDOT crews have been stationed in at-risk areas, along flooded routes and maintaining storm water conveyance systems by keeping them clear of debris since waters began to rise," Kramer said. "We have literally been on duty twenty-four-seven since the storms came through."

Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon declared a State of Emergency during the flooding and MoDOT will receive a partial reimbursement for time and resources spent.

MoDOT will continue to monitor the 34,000 miles of roads and bridges in the region. However, residents are encouraged to report concerns or problems in their area.

"Nine times out of ten, we will already know about the problem, but there are no guarantees," Kramer said.

To report road concerns, go to www.modot.org/roadconcern/ or call 1-888-ASK-MODOT.

Clear"

Roads with the highest traffic volumes are plowed or treated first. These roads include interstates and heavily traveled major roads.

Crews will work continuously on these routes until conditions are mostly clear, meaning only a ribbon of snow remains on stripes and shoulders.

Overnight, emergency crews will monitor for slick spots.

The following day, during normal business hours, crews will continue to work on these roads and work more on lower-volume routes.

Other state roads will be plowed to "Passable"

As soon as possible after a storm ends, MoDOT plows loose snow off the lower volume roads until passable for two-way traffic.

Other critical areas on state road, such as hills, curves and intersections will be last.

Check road conditions during winter events on MoDOT's Traveler Information Map at traveler.modot.org/map/.

Teen roadway, safety days docudrama workshop Jan. 29

The Central District Committee of the Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety, the Missouri Department of Transportation and Meramec Regional Planning Commission are hosting a free how-to workshop on safety days and planning docudramas from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Jan. 29, at Meramec Regional Planning Commission, 4 Industrial Drive, St. James, MO.

During the morning session, Becky Lenon of Missouri Department of Transportation and Bonnie Prigge of Meramec Regional Planning Commission will share ideas for planning safety days.

Activities could include speaker opportunities, equipment and resources available to schools and communities and how to make event fun, safety oriented, and memorable for students.

In the afternoon, workshop participants will hear from a retired teacher, Maggie Roberts, who has coordinated and delivered docudramas for 16 years. Roberts will detail how to plan an event, discuss different docudrama themes and how to involve students, emergency response agencies and community volunteers.

"This is really good training if you are interested in developing safety days or docudramas for your school or community," said Bonnie Prigge, executive director of Meramec Regional Planning Commission. "The workshop really does the planning to develop a strong message for your event."

A free lunch will be provided to those attending the workshop. The training is open to educators, students, law enforcement, EMS, fire and interested community leaders. Please RSVP to Mary Ann Gorrell at 573-265-2993 or by email at mgorrell@meramecregion.org.

Congress, president approve new surface transportation bill

On Dec. 4, President Obama signed a 5-year, \$305 billion highway and transit reauthorization bill, which was overwhelmingly approved by the House and Senate just days earlier. The Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act is the result of negotiations between House and Senate conferees charged with resolving differences between the House and Senate surface transportation reauthorization bills. The FAST Act requires a transfer of \$70 billion in general fund revenue to the Highway Trust Fund from a variety of sources. Key provisions of the FAST Act include:

- A new formula program for highway freight projects
- A new grant program for large-scale projects, the Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects (NSFHP) program
- Modification of the National Highway Freight Network created by MAP-21 and a requirement that the network be re-designated every 5 years
- Expanded funding eligibility for on-system bridges located off the National Highway System
- An increase in the Surface Transportation Program (STP) suballocation to local governments from 50 to 55 percent
- The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) is rolled into STP; 50 percent of certain TAP funding suballocated to local areas can be used on any STP-eligible project
- A competitive grant program for bus and bus facilities funds is reinstated, including a 10 percent set-aside for rural areas

Upcoming Meetings

2016 Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) board meetings dates will be

- Feb. 11
- April 14
- June 9
- Aug. 11
- Oct. 13
- Dec. 8

For more information about upcoming meetings, contact Bonnie Prigge at 573-265-2993 or bprigge@meramecregion.org

The MRPC TAC is a transportation advisory committee . . . your transportation advisory committee! For many years, transportation users outside of the urban areas were planned for, not planned with. Citizens in rural areas had virtually no role in the development of the transportation plans affecting their community. That changed with the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA), and its 1998 successor, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA 21). These acts require that long range transportation planning includes statewide public, private and governmental input—meaningful input—from the grass roots level which will be considered and used in the development of transportation plans. That same effort has continued with SAFETEA-LU - The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Safety Act: A Legacy of Users - in 2005 and MAP-21 - Moving ahead for Progress - in 2012.

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