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## and People's Press of News

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## Officials celebrate bypass completion

## By FAITH KAMMERDIENER Press staff writer

DODGE CENTER -- The new Highway 14 bypass garners other positives to Dodge Center and to the Minnesota Department of Transportation than increasing safety. The interchange gives Dodge Center two accesses it can market, attracting new commercial and industrial businesses that make the city thrive. Dodge Center already has an industrial park in the plans. Highway access should attract new businesses to the park boosting the city's economy, said Dodge County engineer Guy Kohnholfer. "It can't help but open up the area for business," Kohlnhofer said. The Minnesota Department of Transportation is already planning to build a new truck station at the Dodge County Road 26 access, bringing more jobs to Dodge Center. Dodge Center, Dodge County, MnDOT and other officials dedicated the new stretch of Highway 14 Thursday at the Dodge County Highway Building. Since traffic no longer travels through Dodge Center, Kohlnhofer said he hopes he won't come across any more fatal accidents that occurred along the old stretch of Highway 14 running into Dodge Center. Dodge Center started pushing for the bypass around the city in 1988 with a meeting at the Dodge Center Country Club. More than 200 people attended, standing shoulder to shoulder in the room. A task force was then appointed to work on the project. Former Dodge County engineer Dale Grove helped get the project going when he started working on the project using for his final paper while earning his master's degree. "This is something we can really talk about." said

District 28A representative Connie Ruth. "This is so exciting. It is a magnificent job." Ruth said she plans on going back to the transportation finance committee and lobbying for more tax dollars to complete all of Highway 14 from Rochester to New Ulm. Improving Highway 14 is another step in the direction of improving safety on all state highways in an efficient manner, said MnDOT Commissioner Elwyn Tinklenberg. The next stretch of Highway 14 that is being improved is a two-mile stretch on the south side of Owatonna using the design-build concept where MnDOT contracts out the design and construction to another company, speeding up the process. Average design time for state road projects is eight years. "I'm proud to say it's having an effect," Tinklenberg said. MnDOT has managed to save many years off the construction schedule using design-build which the Minnesota state legislature approved last year along with approving the expenditure of about \$254 million in taxpayer money within three years.

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