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U.S. Highway 14 Partnership Takes Their Case to Capitol

On Thursday, March 13, members of the U.S. Highway 14 Partnership representing local governments and businesses along the Highway 14 corridor visited the State Capitol to urge lawmakers to provide additional funding for the Corridors of Commerce program.

Originally passed in 2013 with the strong support of the Partnership, the Corridors of Commerce program is designed to build capacity and address missing links on Minnesota's interregional corridors. Three Highway 14 expansion projects were funded with the initial \$300 million appropriation.

"A lot of progress is going to be made on Highway 14 because of the Corridors of Commerce program, and we're thankful for the Governor and Legislature's past support," noted the Partnership's Vice President/Dodge County Commissioner Steve Gray. "However, there is still work to be done on Highway 14 to provide a four lane corridor from Rochester to New Ulm."

Selected for funding out of the Corridors of Commerce program were the four lane expansion of Highway 14 from North Mankato to Nicollet, the Nicollet bypass, and Phase I of the Owatonna to Dodge Center expansion (U.S. 218 to CR 43). Projects still in need of funding are the Owatonna to Dodge Center Phase 2 and 3 expansions (CR 43 to CR 16, CR 16 to Highway 56), the Nicollet to New Ulm expansion, and the Highway 14/Highway 15 interchange in New Ulm.

"The Partnership's mantra is "14 in '14"," said Partnership President/New Ulm Mayor Bob Beussman. "We're asking our legislators to keep the positive momentum going and continue making progress on delivering the four lane highway we need to improve safety and support southern Minnesota's strong economy. We can do this with additional Corridors of Commerce funding, so we're asking them to make this program a funding priority this session."

The U.S. Highway 14 Partnership is part of Move MN, a broad a coalition of organizations urging the Legislature to pass a statewide transportation investment in the 2014 Session. The Partnership's day in St. Paul ended with a rally of Move MN supporters, which called upon lawmakers to address Minnesota's transportation funding shortfall.

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