

YOUR VIEWS

Accident victims see Highway 14 as a priority

I was extremely disappointed in Gov. Mark Dayton's recent comments in Mankato, where he expressed his reluctance to advocate for including the Highway 14 expansion in Minnesota Department of Transportation's 20-year highway investment plan.

As a person involved in one of this highway's deadly crashes, I can say definitively that fixing this road should be a priority.

I myself never thought much about how people were dying left and right on Highway 14 until Aug. 14, 2010. That foggy morning on the two-lane stretch west of North Mankato, a vehicle crossed into my lane and hit me head on. My car flipped and my arm was pinned underneath it. I was hospitalized with pelvis and leg fractures, a lacerated spleen and other injuries. I am now permanently disabled. The other driver, a 21-year-old soldier on his way to Camp Ripley, was killed.

That morning, I was heading to my last day of work traveling to New

Ulm. I'd gotten a promotion and was supposed to start my new job with the company in Mankato the next day. I was excited about the new direction my life was taking. In an instant, that all changed. Now I am 26 years old and it is a challenge for me to walk.

I have a 14-month-old daughter and it makes me sad to think of the games and sports we won't be able to play together because of my disability.

Mine isn't the only story like this one. In fact, I bet anyone from our neck of the woods could tell you someone they know who's been in a crash on Highway 14. This demonstrates the true safety hazard of this road and why fixing it needs to be a priority.

I ask the governor to reconsider. Listen to the stories of the countless lives disrupted by this deadly highway. As the state's highest elected official, ask your Transportation Department to include the Highway 14 expansion in the 20-year plan and

Letters policy

The Free Press welcomes letters on any issue of general community interest. Please limit your letters to no more than 275 words, typewritten or clearly printed. Letters citing facts that are not common knowledge should include the source of the information. Letters must contain the author's name, address and phone number for verification purposes. All letters will be edited for clarity, grammar, spelling and length. You may email letters to the editor to editor@mankatofreepress.com.

make it a priority in that plan.

Folks have been asking for these improvements — and meanwhile dying on this road — for more than 40 years. I know funding is tight, but how many more people must be injured or killed, how many families must suffer, before our state sees Highway 14 as a priority?

*Eric D. Jacobs
Roseville*