

Local News

/ News / Local News /

« Spinning a yarn about the Mi...

HONU reviews two-year data...»

- Local News
- MN State News
- National News
- International News
- Obituaries
- Opinion
- Lifestyle
- Monday Business
- Agribusiness
- Community
- Local Photos
- SUBMIT News

MnDOT policy on Highway 14 draws ire of legislators

April 19, 2012

By Josh Moniz - Staff Writer (jmoniz@nujournal.com) , The Journal

Save | Comments (1) | Post a comment | SHARE

ST. PAUL The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) officials came under criticism from area senators on Wednesday at the state capitol for its highway improvement methodology and its stated unwillingness to pursue a four-lane expansion of Highway 14.

MnDOT Deputy Commissioner Bernard Arseneau, who faced strong rebuke from area leaders at Tuesday's unveiling of the Highway 14 safety audit, attempted to defend MnDOT's methodology during the hearing, which was organized by Sen. Gary Dahms (R-Redwood Falls).

Arseneau said MnDOT's current decision-making process was consciously developed to maximize benefit for the most Minnesotans while being driven by a realistic approach to MnDOT's funding. He said the traditional, consistent funding sources previously relied on have morphed into multiple, sporadic sources that need to be spread as efficiently as possible over many years.

However, he said MnDOT recognized that more than 30 corridor projects like Highway 14 around the state face chronic problems with not meeting performance criteria. MnDOT is seeking to address these issues by implementing a new Corridor Investment Management Strategies program, or CIMS. He said the program would be allocated enough funds to cover many corridor projects that would be targeted specifically at projects like Highway 14 that face challenges in getting assistance. During Tuesday's meeting with the safety audit, he indicated that the expansion of a four-lane for Highway 14 would be too expensive to pursue over other options.

He argued at the Wednesday hearing that Highway 14 wasn't truly being dropped from MnDOT's 20-year plan because this new CIMS program was designed to target projects exactly like it.

"We have great deal of needs that cannot be met with existing revenue. I'd rather have something that can be done now," said Arseneau, "This doesn't exclude another solution in the future. If we were fortunate enough to get a financial windfall, we could reevaluate some of our projects for bigger options."

Several senators rebuked the proposal and methodology while emphasizing the immediate need of a four-lane expansion for Highway 14.

Sen. Mike Parry (R-Waseca) said the CIMS methodology was flawed for lacking specified projects, making it only benefit projects that had the best lobbyists. He accused MnDOT of being more willing to spend on metro improvement projects at the expense of rural Minnesota.

New Ulm Mayor Bob Beussman testified at the hearing along with other members of the Highway 14 Partnership, arguing that the lack of a four-lane expansion on MnDOT's 20-year construction project plan would only result in more deaths and economic



New Ulm, MN
 43°F
[Extended Forecast](#)
[Find Another Location](#)
Data provided by The Weather Channel ©

News, Blogs & Events

I am looking for:

in:

- News, Blogs & Events
- Web

What could happen to the stock market if Obama is re-elected?

If you have a \$500,000 portfolio, you should download the latest report by *Forbes* columnist Ken Fisher's firm. It tells you what we think may happen in the 2012 elections and why. This must-read report includes research and analysis you can use in your portfolio right now. Don't miss it!

[Click Here to Download Your Report!](#)

www.fi.com FISHER INVESTMENTS Ads by Google

twitter + Amex = Savings

Sync Your Eligible Amex Card With Twitter To Save. Get Started Now! [Sync.AmericanExpress.com](#) AdChoices ▶

Ft. Myers Means Business

Business grows in the Ft Myers area Low corp taxes & great incentives [FortMyersRegionalPartners!](#) AdChoices ▶

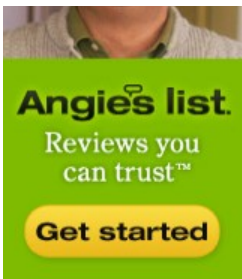
HP® Ink Cartridges

High Quality Original HP® Ink. Official HP.com Site - Shop Now! [HP.com/InkCartridges](#) AdChoices ▶

From roofers to plumbers to dentists and more...

"Angie's List is like having thousands of close neighbors, where I can go ask for personal recommendations."

Dan M.
member since 1999



www.AngiesList.com
 Ads by Google



project plan would only result in more deaths and economic strangulation of southern Minnesota.

"Generations has made this same argument [for a four-lane]. Progress is slow. I guess you can say it's nonexistent," said Beussman.

Dahms said that going forward, the emphasis for Highway 14 four-lane supporters will be to continue talks with MnDOT officials. Maintaining pressure on the officials might lead to the highway being added to the 20-year plan, he said.

Parry plans to press the matter when the Transportation bill enters the Senate floor for debate by introducing an amendment that requires Highway 14 to be a top priority in MnDOT's 20-year plan.

"I'm not trying to do an earmark here. I'm trying to give Highway 14 the best chance to get MnDOT funds once they become available. I don't want MnDOT to be in the position where they don't even consider Highway 14," said Parry.

The safety audit released Tuesday shows that Highway 14 has a fatal crash rate that is three times the state average for similar highways, and over 60 percent more than four-lane highways with similar traffic.

(Josh Moniz can be e-mailed at jmoniz@nujournal.com)

© Copyright 2012 The Journal. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

[Save](#) | [Comments \(1\)](#) | [Post a comment](#) |

One person recommends

0

[Subscribe to The Journal](#)



The Journal

303 N. Minnesota , New Ulm, MN 56073 | 507-359-2911

© 2012. All rights reserved. | [Terms of Service and Privacy Policy](#)