



21° Clear



Search all archived content here [input] GO or click here for Advanced Search

Welcome! Login|Signup

Home Contact Us Subscribe All Access Subscription FAQs Classifieds

Home News Sports Opinion Features Obituaries Calendar Archives Business Classifieds E-edition Elections



# MnDOT official comments about Highway 14 disappoint Owatonna mayor

Story Comments

Share Print Font Size:

Tweet 3 Like 0



By DEREK SULLIVAN dsullivan@owatonna.com

Posted: Wednesday, February 20, 2013 6:00 pm | Updated: 8:52 pm, Wed Feb 20, 2013.

By DEREK SULLIVAN dsullivan@owatonna.com | 0 comments

Posted on February 20, 2013 by SULLIVAN

OWATONNA— Tom Kuntz heard what he expected to hear, but not what he wanted to hear.

The Owatonna mayor was one of several lawmakers and business leaders who live on the Highway 14 corridor who spoke to Minnesota House members on the Committee for Transportation Policy on Wednesday afternoon at the State Capitol.

## Petersburg hears from Partnership

Rep. John Petersburg, R-Waseca, hears testimony from members of the Highway 14 Partnership on Wednesday afternoon at the State Capitol. (Photo courtesy of Minnesota House of Representatives)

Kuntz was in St. Paul supporting a bill authored by Rep. Kathy Brynaert, DFL-Mankato, which, if passed, would place the expansion of Highway 14 from Owatonna to Dodge Center from two lanes to four lanes on MnDOT's 20-year State Highway Investment Plan.

The updated 20-year plan will prioritize the allocation of state and federal transportation funding from 2013 to 2032. The plan is expected to be released in August.

In 2009, the Highway 14 expansion was placed on a 20-year plan, but was given little, if any, priority and was not expected to receive MnDOT funding. Brynaert's bill would make sure Highway 14 would not be ignored completely this time around, which Kuntz said is a possibility. If MnDOT doesn't place the roughly 20-mile stretch east of Owatonna in the next 20-year plan, proponents of the expansion won't be able to ask for funding until 2017.

Kuntz said he has been advocating for the expansion of the busy two-lane highway for years because he feels the road is not safe.

"Too many people are needlessly losing their lives on Highway 14," Kuntz said to committee members, referencing the 52 fatalities and 41 serious injury crashes that occurred over the past decade on Highway 14 between Rochester and New Ulm. "Highway 14 must be included in the plan and the department needs to start allocating resources towards its completion. We don't want to waste the prior investments that have been made towards the

WALSER BUICK PRICE PROTECTION -14 DAY- PRICE MATCH Guarantee. CLICK FOR GUARANTEED LOWEST PRICES

Online Poll: Will you watch the Academy Awards Sunday night? Total Votes: 206. Options: I w ouldn't miss them, I'll catch them if I remember, I'll catch them if I have time, I w on't waste my time.

Homes Jobs IMMEDIATE OPENINGS! Featured posted: February 15 More Homes Place your ad now!

expansion, let alone risk the safety of drivers or our region's economic growth."

After Kuntz's comments, committee chairperson Ron Ernhardt, DFL-Edina, asked Scott Peterson, director of government affairs for MnDOT, to speak. Kuntz said that Peterson told the committee that MnDOT is looking at repairing roads and not, "big ticket items."

"It's not what I wanted to hear," Kuntz said, referencing Peterson's comments after the session ended on Wednesday.

The widening of Highway 14 from Owatonna to Dodge Center is expected to cost \$219 million.

Also speaking to the committee on behalf of Brynaert's bill were Patrick Baker, Greater Mankato Growth; Bob Beussman, New Ulm mayor; and Noreen Otto of Hy-Vee.

The Highway 14 Partnership contingent emphasized the amount of business done on the highway. Otto told the committee about the large number of Hy-Vee fleet trucks that come in and out of Owatonna. Coca-Cola also has a large fleet of trucks located in Steele County.

While business traffic was referenced, the Partnership continued to talk about safety.

"A safety audit performed by MnDOT last spring identified many unsafe intersections along Highway 14," Beussman told the committee. "This audit recommended that the Highway 14 and Highway 15 intersection be upgraded to an interchange when the department replaces the abutting New Ulm Bridge in 2018. So far, this necessary safety improvement remains unplanned and unfunded by MnDOT. For the flow of commerce in and out of New Ulm, and the

safety of area drivers, we need to make sure this project and the full four-lane expansion is included in the 20-year plan."

Despite the comments from Peterson, Kuntz and the rest of the Highway 14 Partnership will move forward. On Friday, Kuntz and others will be at MnDOT headquarters to speak with Commissioner Charlie Zelle.

"We will look at every avenue to push, push, push this expansion," Kuntz said.

In order to create a four-lane highway from Rochester to New Ulm, two segments needs to be expanded: From Owatonna to Dodge Center and from Nicollet to New Ulm. Minnesota Gov. Mark Dayton last summer committed to expanding Highway 14 between North Mankato and Nicollet in 2017-2018.

Brynaert's bill was laid over for possible inclusion in a transportation policy omnibus bill. A similar action was taken last week by the state Senate's Committee for Transportation and Public Safety on two bills authored by Sen. Vicki Jensen, DFL-Owatonna.

Brynaert's bill asking for \$409 million to expand the two-lane sections of Highway 14 between Rochester and New Ulm will be heard in the House Transportation Finance on Wednesday. Rep. John Petersburg, R-Waseca, and Rep. Patti Fritz, DFL-Faribault, are among the many co-authors on both of Brynaert's bills. Both Petersburg and Fritz represent parts of Steele County.

Reach reporter Derek Sullivan at 444-2372, or follow him on Twitter @OPPSullivan

Reach reporter Derek Sullivan at 444-2372, or follow him on Twitter @OPPSullivan

© 2013 Southermminn.com. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

More about [Minnesota](#)

- **ARTICLE:** Blowers racing success starts – and finishes – with family in Waseca
- **ARTICLE:** Lonsdale Area Food Shelf preps for month-long, city-wide drive
- **ARTICLE:** VIEWS FROM ELSEWHERE: Medical devices shouldn't get tax break
- **ARTICLE:** Waseca boys can't keep up with Faribault in 8-2 season-ending playoff loss

**Real Deals**  
STEELE & WASECA COUNTIES

**The Boat House Grill and Bar - \$10 Gift Voucher for \$5**



Great food with a Lake view. The Boat House was founded over 100 years ago and was originally a busin...

**Email:**

**Tweet** 3 **Like** 0

**Discuss** Share Print

Categories

Posted in [News](#), [Local](#), [Region](#), [Region](#), [Local](#), [News](#), [Region](#), [News](#) on *Wednesday, February 20, 2013 6:00 pm. Updated: 8:52 pm.* | Tags: [Minnesota](#), [Kathy Brynaert](#), [Highway 14 Partnership](#), [Mndot](#), [Dodge Center](#), [Owatonna](#), [New Ulm](#), [Scott Peterson](#), [New Ulm Bridge](#), [Owatonna Mayor](#), [Minnesota Department Of Transportation](#), [Director Of Government Affairs](#), [Ron Ernhardt](#), [New Ulm Minnesota](#), [Bob Beussman](#), [Owatonna Minnesota](#), [Patrick Baker](#), [Noreen Otto](#), [Mark Dayton](#), [Patti Fritz](#), [Coca-cola](#), [Steele County](#), [Charlie Zelle](#), [Transportation Policy Omnibus Bill](#), [Committee For Transportation And Public Safety](#)

- ### Similar Stories
- Blowers' racing success starts – and finishes – with family in Waseca
  - Fire occurs on Lemond Road in rural Owatonna
  - State Sen. Vicki Jensen fields comments from Faribault City Council
  - TIF district a success for Faribault
  - Owatonna-based Viracon outsources trucking; 29 affected employees eligible to join new provider

- ### Most Read
- UPDATE: Missing Northfield man found
  - Faribault man accused of child abuse
  - Piper, Spatenka named Owatonna Snow Week king and queen
  - Northfield man indicted in rural pedestrian fatality
  - David S. Mussman of Owatonna

## Rules of Conduct

<p><b>1 Keep it Clean.</b> Please avoid obscene, vulgar, lewd, racist or sexually-oriented language.</p> <p><b>2 Don't Threaten or Abuse.</b> Threats of harming another person will not be tolerated. AND PLEASE TURN OFF CAPS LOCK.</p> <p><b>3 Be Truthful.</b> Don't knowingly lie about anyone or anything.</p>	<p><b>4 Be Nice.</b> No racism, sexism or any sort of -ism that is degrading to another person.</p> <p><b>5 Be Proactive.</b> Use the 'Report' link on each comment to let us know of abusive posts.</p> <p><b>6 Share with Us.</b> We'd love to hear eyewitness accounts, the history behind an article.</p>
--	---

## Welcome to the discussion.

**Screen Name or Email** **Or, use your facebook account:**

**Password**


 [Forgot?](#)

**Remember me on this computer**

[Need an account? Create one now.](#)

### Southernminn Offers


**BOGO 50% off or 50% Off Tradit...**



**Buy One Pizza Get the Second Pizza 50% Off Or Buy a Family Size Pizza and Receiv...**

Gooters | Pizza - Frozen Cookie, Bread & Pastry Dough - Ice Cream -


**\$25 Off**



**Min Purchase of \$399**

America's Mattress & Furniture 2 Go! Mattress & Furniture Store in

**Weekly Coupon**



**Weekly Coupon**

C-Store Le Center - Gas & Fast Food Convenience Store

- ### Recent Comments
- Posted 1 hour ago by Jim Cook
- ARTICLE: The Penalty Box: Applauding Northfield ...**
- There's much that could be said about "standing up for what you believe,&q...
- [More...](#)
- Posted 3 hours ago by consider.
- ARTICLE: U.S. can wean itself off fossil fuels**
- Sparo - This debate has absolutely nothing to do with me or my background - and...
- [More...](#)
- Posted 4 hours ago by Special Ed.
- ARTICLE: Enough with the faux intimacy**
- Richard, I love this article. ;-) xoxo LOL
- In all honesty, I completely agree!
- ...
- [More...](#)
- Posted 5 hours ago by jkine805.
- ARTICLE: Motor sports: not in my backyard**
- Chuck,
- You state that "Only those who find themselves in the crosshairs of deve...
- [More...](#)

**Popular** **Commented** **Facebook Activity**

Stories

David S. Mussman of Owatonna

Piper, Spatenka named Owatonna Snow Week king and queen

Owatonna woman refuses to give in to cancer

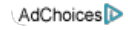
Owatonna Junior High teacher faces curveball

Owatonna man deals with the unexpected

[More](#)

[Photos](#)

[Videos](#)



### Sections

- [Home](#)
- [News](#)
- [Sports](#)
- [Opinion](#)
- [Features](#)
- [Obituaries](#)
- [Photos](#)
- [Videos](#)
- [Online Features](#)
- [Weather](#)

### Services

- [Contact Us](#)
- [Subscription Services](#)
- [Submission Forms](#)
- [Site Index](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [Delivery / Refund policies](#)
- [Add Search Toolbar](#)

### Contact us

[owatonna.com](http://owatonna.com)

Owatonna Peoples Press  
**Phone number:** 507-451-2840  
**Address:** 135 W. Pearl St  
 Owatonna, MN 55060

### Search

Search in:

- All
- News
- Sports
- Features
- Opinion
- Photos
- Video