

KAALtv.com

Renewed Calls to Address Highway 14 Dangers

Posted at: 09/16/2013 6:52 PM
By: Katie Eldred

(ABC 6 NEWS) -- It's one of the most dangerous roadways in the state. Monday area leaders gathered in Rochester to urge improvements to Highway 14.

Some say the need to fix the roadway is becoming more urgent.

Piepho Moving and Storage has been located off of Highway 14 for years.

"Since 1978," said manager Jeff Piepho.

During that time Piepho says they've been waiting for the highway to transformed to fix its ongoing issues.

"As they've added lanes it's really been wonderful, but that area through Claremont to Owatonna is just rough," said Piepho.

Congressman Tim Walz, joined by Rochester leaders, stopped by Piepho Moving and Storage to talk about the many reasons why the Highway 14 project is much needed.

"Because each and every one of us knows a neighbor and a friend that has been killed on this road, and we know businesses who tell us day in and day out that if this is not fixed it's constricting our ability to grow," said Rep. Tim Walz.

The project would finishing expanding parts of Highway 14 from two lanes to four lanes. The group is urging Governor Dayton and MnDOT to make sure the Highway 14 corridor makes the states 20 year transportation plan.

Rochester leaders say with DMC the road needs to be ready for the added traffic.

"A 100,000 people that we anticipate growing this community by and this entire region and we can't make this economic opportunity a reality without great transportation infrastructure," said Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce president John Wade.

"Get this thing done, put this on the priority list and let us build this highway, and then let's let these folks do what they do best," said Rep. Walz.

The project would eventually span from state border to state border. Opening doors of opportunity for businesses that depend on easy access.

Like Piepho Moving and Storage, who's hoping in the near future their drivers won't be driving down a two line highway.

"It's been that way for years and decades, so it's really time to get that part finished," said Piepho.

MnDOT is expected to finalize its 20 year plan in the next few days. Congressman Walz says if it does not make the list it will make it increasingly more difficult to get federal funding and grants for the project.