

Governor's announcement will improve Nicollet County transportation

By CLARK JOHNSON Guest columnist | Posted: Saturday, November 16, 2013 5:38 pm

I have great news to report. On Thursday, Gov. Mark Dayton and the Minnesota Department of Transportation unveiled 10 highway construction projects that will receive funding through the state's new \$300 million Corridors of Commerce program. Three of the construction projects are on U.S. Highway 14 in southern Minnesota, including two that will greatly improve transit in Nicollet County.

The proposed four-lane expansion of the stretch between North Mankato and Nicollet has been moved up to 2015-16 and has been allocated up to \$28 million, and the four-lane Nicollet Bypass is slated to for groundbreaking in 2015 and has been rewarded \$25 million.

This is a really good day for Nicollet County. You have told me repeatedly that improvements to this stretch of highway are not only an issue of commerce; they are an issue of public safety. And I shared that with my colleagues. I'm glad that the governor has agreed.

The Nicollet Bypass will improve safety at two high crash intersections (Hwys. 14 and 99 and Hwys. 14 and 111).

So many of you can lay claim to this victory. The mayors along Highway 14 – Nicollet Mayor Fred Froehlich, New Ulm Mayor Robert Beussman and North Mankato Mayor Mark Dehen – and Nicollet County officials never gave up the fight to get this highway improved. And the Highway 14 Partnership has literally been working toward this goal for nearly 50 years. I've always said that democracy works best when lots of people are involved.

This is a very important step for the people of District 19A, but it can't be the last. We need to continue to focus on Highway 14 – and the transportation needs of the entire state – as we move our state forward. I will keep my promise to be a relentless advocate for the transportation needs of our district.