



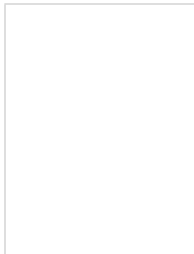
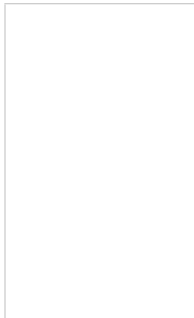
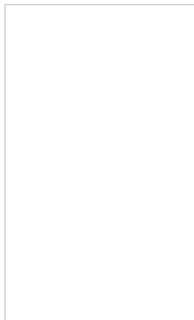
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# Don't shortchange Nicollet interchange

December 19, 2013

The Journal

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To the editor:

I wanted to take this opportunity to share my thoughts and experiences with the development and design of the Highway 14 project from North Mankato to Nicollet.

In the mid-90s I was the Mayor of Nicollet and the Highway 14 four-lane project was being discussed by the Ventura administration. There were community meetings in Nicollet involving residents and elected officials to try and make the "most dangerous highway" in Minnesota safer, but funding was diverted to the Metro area.

Fast-forward to today, let's look at what has changed. The volume of traffic has obviously increased since the mid-90s. There have been many more deaths and serious injury accidents between North Mankato and Nicollet. In the recent meeting at Nicollet public school, MNDOT discussed the amount of deaths and serious personal injury accidents at the intersection of Highway 14 and 111. MNDOT and their engineers reported that one fatal incident had occurred since 2008. They did not take into account Highway 99 and Highway 14 or Elm St. and Highway 14 which are just blocks from this same intersection. All of which the same traffic will use the new intersection whatever it may be. There have been countless more serious injuries accessing Highway 14 then what was discussed. I know because I've responded to these personal injury accidents and fatal crashes working for the Nicollet County Sheriff's office. I have seen the results of highway speed head-on and right-angle crashes. The number of fatalities between North Mankato and New Ulm is unacceptable and has been for years. MNDOT stated land would be purchased for interchange. Obviously the state recognizes the potential for even heavier traffic in the future. We do not want a Band-Aid now to get us by. Highway 14 is used by those of us who live in this community to go to Mankato and New Ulm to go to church, to get groceries and for social events and is often used multiple times a day by residents.

We have been patient and trusting in our elected officials who make the decisions for this important highway. We believe that those in charge recognize what residents here have gone through living on this highway. Everyone in our community knows someone who has died in a violent manner along this highway. Our police, firemen and EMS workers have been asked to respond to crashes year after year hoping that change is coming. Now the time has come and once again it appears funding may be pulled for the safest option, an interchange.

This highway has been the one of the most dangerous highways in our state and has not received the attention it deserves until now. The engineers know, the state knows and certainly the residents in and around the City of Nicollet understand an interchange is the best and only option and would best serve our community. Please make the right choice.

Marc Chadderdon

Nicollet

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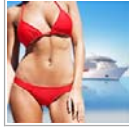
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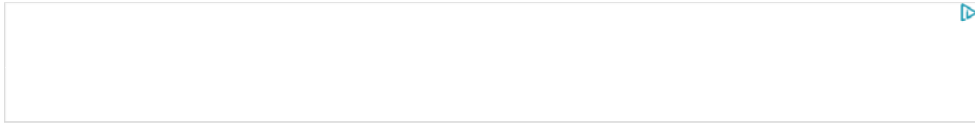


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