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Klobuchar, Zelle visit New Ulm on Highway 14 tour

Local group seeks more funding

May 29, 2014

By Fritz Busch - Staff Writer , The Journal

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NEW ULM - U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar and Minnesota Department of Transportation Commissioner Charlie Zelle met with local officials on a Highway 14 Improvement Tour on Wednesday that included stops in Nicollet, Rochester and Dodge Center.

New Ulm Mayor Bob Beussman spoke passionately about the need for Highway 14 improvements.

"Companies from all over the world tell me they'd love to come to New Ulm until they see the transportation issues with two-lane highways," Beussman said. "If we get four-lane highways here, it would really add jobs to local and southern Minnesota business and industry."

Article Photos



Staff photo by Fritz Busch

New Ulm Chamber of Commerce President/CEO Audra Shaneman said New Ulm didn't get everything it wanted at the last legislative session.

"There are lots of business and industrial orders getting filled here and lots of Highway 14 traffic," Shaneman said. "New Ulm is a manufacturing community. We make stuff. Any funding you can send our way will be appreciated."

Klobuchar praised the Highway 14 Improvement Coalition for its effectiveness at pulling many communities together.

Beussman said in addition to lots of small, medium and large business and industry, New Ulm has a medical center that continues to grow and add new technology.

"We can no longer earmark federal money, but we'll push for more funding. I saw lots of traffic on Highway 14 today - cars and semis," Klobuchar said. "We're talking about billions of dollars going into infrastructure. We could do this with comprehensive tax reform. Plus there is lots of money going overseas now that could be directed back to the U.S."

Zelle said the Highway Trust Fund will be discussed in Washington over the next six weeks.

Earlier this month, Gov. Mark Dayton signed the supplemental budget bill including \$31.5 million for Corridors of Commerce and Highway 14 turnback funding into law.

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Land acquisition for Highway 14 four-lane expansion from west Nicollet to North Mankato is scheduled to take place this year. Construction is planned to begin in 2015. The Highway 14 bridges in New Ulm are scheduled for replacement in 2018.

(Fritz Busch can be e-mailed at fbusch@nujournal.com).

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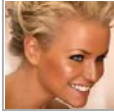


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