

## Highway 14 must be a Campaign Issue

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To the editor:

Every commercial on TV is a political ad, your mailbox is full of literature, and candidates are coming to your door to talk about the issues. It's official: campaign season is in full swing! As much as we'd like to ignore the electioneering and focus on the changing leaves, there's too much at stake in the 2014 election for us to do that. You've got it; I'm talking about Highway 14.

Folks around here don't need to be reminded that we've been waiting over 40 years for the four lane expansion of Highway 14 to be completed. We all know there's a unique mix of commercial, agricultural, and commuting vehicles that rely on this highway, and demand is only increasing as our region's population and economy grows. We're all too familiar with the tragedies that have occurred on this corridor and the lives that have been lost. We all feel strongly that Highway 14 needs to be four lanes from Rochester to New Ulm, for the safety and economic success of the region.

So I urge you, turn those feelings into action this election cycle! When candidates come to your door, ask them if they'll support additional, ongoing funding of the Corridors of Commerce program. This new transportation funding program has helped make meaningful progress on Highway 14, but without additional funding, the remaining two-lane bottlenecks won't be upgraded.

When you attend a debate, participate! Ask the candidates if they will make Highway 14 and improving Minnesota's transportation system a priority next session. We've heard time and again that current transportation funding falls short of meeting the state's needs. It's a matter of math: with the combination of vehicles becoming more fuel efficient (less revenue) and inflation (higher costs), our ability to pay for needed road and bridge improvements suffers. It's a real problem that needs a real solution, and we need elected officials that are serious about providing the funding needed to complete Highway 14.

On behalf of the U.S. Highway 14 Partnership, I ask that you let those candidates vying to represent you know that improving Highway 14 is an election issue and that you are looking for real action and solutions to complete this corridor. Our region is vibrant and growing, and we can't continue to be held back by lack of adequate transportation infrastructure.

Mayor Bob Beussman

City of New Ulm

President

U.S. Highway 14 Partnership