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GUEST VIEW

Report card confirms need for more road \$

It's that time of year again — pothole season, which then transitions into orange barrel season.

In Michigan, it appears that road work never ends, but many question why our roads stay in such poor shape with all the work being done.

The fact is that the road and bridge work that occurs each year is not the complete reconstruction that is needed to fix the real problem. Rather, it is much more likely to be shot-term maintenance and repairs — quick fixes to address long-term problems.

Late last month The Road Information Program (TRIP) released its report card on Michigan's roads, bridges, safety and congestion. The grades were not surprising, with a "D" for roads and bridges, a "C-" for safety and a "C" for congestion. These grades definitely leave room for improvement.

The results of this report card are not a reflection on state or local road agencies, but rather a wake-up call to the funding shortage our transportation system faces.

Currently Michigan funds its transportation system mainly through revenues from fuel taxes on unleaded and diesel fuels. In Michigan, drivers pay a state gasoline tax of 19 cents per gallon, regardless of per-gallon price fluctuations.

There is no added revenue for roads when the price of fuel escalates. In fact, when drivers cut back on driving to be fuel conscientious, fuel tax revenues decline.

A recent program announced by Gov. Jennifer Granholm to accelerate local road projects and state money to help secure federal dollars is a welcome opportunity for legislators to make transportation funding a priority.

Although this initiative will put more than 7,000 people to work, it is still a drop in the bucket as it relates to the overall needs that our state faces.

By providing the proper long-term funding to our transportation system, Michigan's roads and economy will begin to see the substantial improvement that is long overdue.



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The opinions expressed in the GUEST VIEW do not necessarily represent the opinions of The Daily News.