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## Rough Pothole Season Ahead for Mid-Michigan

Budgets for potholes are still looking slim for Lansing and counties in Mid-Michigan.

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 Potholes



They're annoying, they'll rattle your commute and could even be a danger...they are the dreaded Michigan potholes. Cement Finisher Tracy Hammond says, "You try to go around them at all costs without causing an accident, but some of them are pretty deep. It can really destroy the undercarriage of an automobile."

Hammond has been taming potholes with a city crew for 15 years. He says, "They're bad. They're very bad. We had a lot more heaving than what I thought we should have had for the mild winter, but the roads are just...they're falling apart."

Repairing the potholes and the roads is an uphill battle that some say won't be won without an increase in the gas tax. Director of Public Service for the City of Lansing Chad Gamble says, "We've been getting less and less money for 13 years over the past several years to maintain roads that are becoming worse and worse."

Without the funding to fill the holes, Gamble says our roads will go to pot. He says, "The funding issues in regard to the gas tax are really becoming super critical right now. We really don't have the amount of money necessary even to maintain or possibly do pothole repair."

Road commissions were hoping to save money on plowing due to a mild winter, but February snows changed that. Managing Director of the Ingham county Road Commission Bill Conklin says, "With the last 2 weeks of snow events, we're right on target with our snow budget so we aren't over or under. We were hoping the good weather we had prior to the last couple weeks would continue and we'd have decent savings from winter maintenance, but that's not looking like that's going to be the case. The past two weeks with all the salt and OT (overtime) usage, has kind of caught us up to where we should be in our winter maintenance budget so there really isn't a savings there."

There is a point that you have to replace a road, but both Lansing and the county say they have no choice but to patch until the funding comes in. Conklin says, "A good 25% to 30% of our roads need to be reconstructed. There's just no money to do it."

Gamble says a little over 2 million dollars in stimulus money has been put toward fixing roads in Lansing. He says, "We repaired sections of Michigan Avenue and Washington last year and this year we will be continuing those projects by repairing sections of Edgewood Boulevard and Holmes Road."


Gamble is hoping more stimulus money comes through in the spring. He says, "We're hearing about some stimulus packages that are working their way through the congress and the senate in varying degrees and varying funding levels and various sponsors. So, it goes so far as to just continue the baseline support of the reauthorization, the transportation bills to increase funding from the stimulus packages that were received last year. So, we're hopeful we can at least receive some stimulus monies to inject some pothole repairs and rehabilitation repairs to our roads here in Lansing." If that happens, Gamble says they will target Jolly Road first.

Conklin says roads in Ingham County are also scheduled for an overhaul. He says parts of Aurelius will be worked on this year. He says parts of Lake Lansing Road are scheduled for repair in 2013.

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