



IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 8, 2006

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Michigan Transportation Team Kicks-Off Drive MI *Launch of new Web site to provide resource on transportation issues in Michigan*

LANSING, Mich. — Michigan business and labor leaders are joining forces again to tackle Michigan's long-standing practice of underfunding transportation needs.

"Everyone knows gas prices are skyrocketing but few people realize that less and less money is going into our roads, bridges and public transportation," said Mike Nystrom, co-chair of the Michigan Transportation Team (MTT). "No matter what the price is at the pump, only 19 cents per gallon makes its way into the Michigan Transportation Fund - and that's not enough to keep the potholes filled, the bridges safe and the buses rolling."

MTT boasts a membership of over 40 groups including the Michigan Chamber of Commerce, International Union of Operating Engineers (Local #324), Michigan Municipal League, Michigan Manufacturers Association, County Road Association of Michigan, Michigan Infrastructure & Transportation Association and a number of chambers of commerce from across the state. This group successfully lobbied Congress in 2005 for increased federal transportation funding to be returned to Michigan.

"Michigan roads are some of the worst in the country," Nystrom said. "Current funding is unable to keep pace with the transportation needs across the state." The Road Information Program (TRIP) estimated in 2004 that Michigan faces a \$700 million annual funding shortfall over the next 20 years.

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In fact, many Michigan roads received failing grades in a recent TRIP report card issued earlier this year. Detroit received an “F” for roads and bridges and a “D” for congestion. Lansing and Grand Rapids also both received an “F” for roads. Michigan received an overall grade of “D” for roads and bridges.

The 2006 TRIP report on Michigan’s roads, along with transportation facts and figures, news stories and economic impact information, can be found on the Drive MI Web site, the first volley of information in what is expected to be an extensive information and education campaign. The Web site — www.drivemi.org — will be updated on a regular basis and allows users to speak their minds on road conditions in the “speak up” section.

"We're in this for the long haul," Nystrom said. "We know from experience that people immediately recognize the poor quality of Michigan’s transportation network. Maintaining and enhancing our state’s transportation infrastructure is a critical factor that impacts the cost of doing business for Michigan job providers."

Sponsored by MTT, the Drive MI campaign is a comprehensive strategy for fully funding Michigan’s transportation system in the 21st century. MTT represents a partnership of businesses, associations, unions and citizens linked with the common goal of improving Michigan’s transportation infrastructure.

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