

## Report rates 23% of rural Iowa bridges “deficient”

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A new national report suggests nearly a quarter of the bridges on Iowa’s rural roads are “deficient.”

[The report was prepared by a national research group](#) whose work is financed by groups and businesses involved in the road construction industry — an industry lobbying for more government spending on roads. Stephen Sandherr, the C.E.O. of the Associated General Contractors of America, says poor rural bridge conditions prevent farmers from quickly moving their grain and livestock to market.

“The state of the nation’s rural roads and bridges is distressingly bad,” he says.

Frank Moretti is the report’s author. He concluded 23 percent of the bridges on Iowa’s rural roads have significant deficiencies that endanger the economy as well as those who drive over those bridges.

“The quality of life in America’s small communities and rural areas and the health of the nation’s rural economy is based largely on the production of energy, food and fiber,” Moretti says. “These are sectors of the economy that are highly reliant on the quality of the transportation system, particularly roads and bridges and highways which provide the first and last link in the supply chain from farm to market.”

Only three other states had a higher percentage of rural bridges rated as deficient in the group’s report and a few Midwestern states followed Iowa in the ranking. Twenty-one percent of South Dakota’s rural bridges were rated as deficient; 19 percent of the rural bridges in Nebraska and 18 percent of the rural bridges in Missouri are deficient according to the report’s author.

Most Midwestern states ranked well in terms of the condition of rural roads with the exceptions of Oklahoma, which had its rural roads ranked as the third-worst in the nation, and Kansas, which ranked as the sixth worst.