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**MICHIGAN’S RURAL ROADS AND BRIDGES HAVE HIGH RATES OF DEFICIENCIES AND FATALITIES; STATE’S RURAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM IN NEED OF MODERNIZATION TO BETTER SUPPORT ECONOMIC GROWTH AND CONNECTIVITY**

*Eds: This report contains data for all 50 states for the percentage of rural roads in poor condition, the percent of deficient rural bridges, rural traffic fatality rates and the number of rural traffic fatalities. [Click here for infographics.](#)*

**Washington, D.C.** – America’s rural transportation system is in need of repairs and modernization to support economic growth in the nation’s Heartland, which is a critical source of energy, food and fiber. Rural America is home to an aging and increasingly diverse population that is heavily reliant on the quality of its transportation system. This is according to a new report released today by [TRIP](#). The report, [Rural Connections: Challenges and Opportunities in America’s Heartland](#), evaluates the safety and condition of the nation’s rural roads and bridges and finds that the nation’s rural transportation system is in need of improvements to address deficient roads and bridges, high crash rates, and inadequate connectivity and capacity. TRIP is a national non-profit transportation research group based in Washington, D.C. The chart below shows the states with the highest rate of rural pavements in poor condition, states with the highest share of structurally deficient rural bridges and those with the highest fatality rates on non-Interstate, rural roads.

Rank	STATE	Rural Roads in Poor Condition	STATE	Structurally Deficient Rural Bridges	STATE	Fatality Rate per 100M VMT on Rural Roads	Fatality Rate per 100M VMT on All Other Roads
1	Rhode Island	41%	Rhode Island	22%	South Carolina	3.82	1.03
2	Connecticut	39%	Iowa	22%	California	3.19	0.66
3	California	38%	Pennsylvania	22%	Kentucky	2.98	0.72
4	Hawaii	28%	South Dakota	20%	Mississippi	2.93	0.70
5	Mississippi	25%	West Virginia	17%	Montana	2.81	0.86
6	New Mexico	25%	Nebraska	16%	Nevada	2.77	1.06
7	Vermont	24%	Oklahoma	16%	Arizona	2.70	1.15
8	Pennsylvania	22%	North Dakota	16%	North Carolina	2.69	0.65
9	Arkansas	22%	Louisiana	15%	Oregon	2.68	0.64
10	Oklahoma	22%	Maine	15%	Arkansas	2.56	0.90
11	Missouri	21%	Missouri	14%	Virginia	2.46	0.51
12	Washington	21%	Mississippi	13%	Louisiana	2.46	1.16
13	Alaska	20%	New York	13%	Texas	2.43	1.09
14	Virginia	20%	New Hampshire	13%	Tennessee	2.35	0.91
15	Maine	19%	<b>Michigan</b>	<b>13%</b>	Georgia	2.35	0.96
16	Wisconsin	19%	North Carolina	11%	Pennsylvania	2.33	0.83
17	Louisiana	18%	New Jersey	11%	Wyoming	2.30	0.92
18	<b>Michigan</b>	<b>17%</b>	South Carolina	11%	Illinois	2.28	0.70
19	West Virginia	17%	Wyoming	11%	West Virginia	2.24	0.81
20	Iowa	15%	Idaho	10%	Kansas	2.24	0.50
21	Idaho	14%	Alaska	10%	Indiana	2.24	0.61
22	South Dakota	14%	Massachusetts	10%	Oklahoma	2.21	0.91
23	Texas	14%	Wisconsin	10%	Washington	2.20	0.64
24	Massachusetts	13%	Kansas	9%	<b>Michigan</b>	<b>2.19</b>	<b>0.59</b>
25	Minnesota	12%	Montana	9%	Colorado	2.09	0.83

The report finds that rural roads and bridges in Michigan have significant deficiencies. Seventeen percent of Michigan's rural roads are rated in poor condition – the 18<sup>th</sup> highest rate in the nation - and 26 percent are rated in mediocre condition. Thirteen percent of Michigan's rural bridges are rated as structurally deficient, the 15<sup>th</sup> highest rate in the nation. The rate of traffic fatalities on Michigan's non-Interstate, rural roads – 2.19 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel – is the 24<sup>th</sup> highest in the nation and is nearly four times higher than the fatality rate on all other roads in the state.

"Having safe and reliable roads is a continuous challenge for the agriculture industry and Michigan's rural communities. Farmers, who primarily live in these rural areas, depend on local roads to get their products to and from farm and market," said Carl Bednarski, president of the Michigan Farm Bureau. "Posted bridges with reduced weight limits requires vehicles transporting commodities to take burdensome detours, while crumbling roads add to maintenance cost and risk damaging valuable produce. These factors increase costs for farmers, consumers and other in our nation's food system. Adequate investment in transportation infrastructure is vital to the continued prosperity of the agriculture industry in Michigan."

The quality of life in America's small communities and rural areas, and the health of the nation's rural economy, is highly reliant on the quality of the nation's transportation system, particularly its roads, highways and bridges. America's rural transportation system provides the first and last link in the supply chain from farm to market while supporting the tourism industry and enabling the production of energy, food and fiber. Rural Americans are more reliant on the quality of their transportation system than their urban counterparts.

The traffic fatality rate on the nation's rural, non-Interstate roads is approximately two-and-a-half times higher than on all other roads. The number of fatalities and the fatality rate on rural, non-Interstate U.S. roads increased in 2105 after decreasing each year between 2012 and 2014. "Rural roads are far too often overlooked. With fatality rates rising, repairing and maintaining the nation's roads must be a top priority for legislators," said Kathleen Bower, AAA senior vice president of public affairs and international relations. "By investing in improvements for today and tomorrow, we can deliver safer experiences for motorists and save tens of thousands of lives."

The TRIP report finds that the U.S. needs to implement transportation improvements that will improve rural transportation connectivity, safety and conditions to provide the nation's small communities and rural areas with safe and efficient access to support quality of life and enhance economic productivity. The nation's ability to address its rural transportation challenges will be greatly enhanced if Congress is able to provide a long-term, dedicated, user-based revenue stream capable of fully funding the federal surface transportation program.

"We applaud the president, the new administration, and members of Congress for leading the conversation on an issue of critical importance to our 21st century economy: rebuilding America's infrastructure," said U.S. Chamber's Executive Director for Transportation Infrastructure Ed Mortimer. "The American business community looks forward to developing and implementing a long-term plan that will bring our nation's rural and urban infrastructure up to speed and spur economic growth. Now is the time to take action and to get the job done."

"The safety and quality of life in America's small communities and rural areas and the health of the nation's economy ride on our rural transportation system. The nation's rural roads and bridges provide crucial links from farm to market, move manufactured and energy products, and provide access to countless tourism, social and recreational destinations," said Will Wilkins, executive director of TRIP. "Fixing the federal Highway Trust Fund with a long-term, sustainable source of revenue that supports the transportation investment needed will be crucial to the modernization of our rural transportation system."