



**For Immediate Release**

**Tuesday, May 19, 2015**

Report available at: [www.tripnet.org](http://www.tripnet.org)

Contact: [Rocky Moretti](mailto:Rocky.Moretti@tripnet.org) (202) 262-0714

[Carolyn Bonifas Kelly](mailto:Carolyn.BonifasKelly@tripnet.org) (703) 801-9212

TRIP office (202) 466-6706

## **KANSAS' RURAL ROADS HAVE HIGH RATES OF DEFICIENCIES AND HIGH FATALITY RATES; STATE'S RURAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM IN NEED OF MODERNIZATION TO BETTER SUPPORT ECONOMIC GROWTH**

*Eds: A news conference will be held at 11:00 a.m. EDT on Tuesday, May 19 via teleconference. For details and dial-in information, click [here](#). 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](#).*

**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 and home to an aging and increasingly diverse population that is heavily reliant on the quality of its transportation system. A [new report](#) released today by [TRIP](#) 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 rural roads.

Rank	STATE	Rural Pavement in Poor Condition	STATE	Structurally Deficient Rural Bridges	STATE	Rural Fatality Rate	Fatality Rate on All Other Roads
1	Michigan	37%	Pennsylvania	25%	Connecticut	3.57	0.59
2	Rhode Island	32%	Rhode Island	23%	S. Carolina	3.40	0.69
3	Hawaii	31%	Iowa	22%	Florida	3.20	0.96
4	Idaho	31%	South Dakota	21%	Montana	3.09	0.76
5	<b>Kansas</b>	<b>30%</b>	Oklahoma	19%	Arizona	3.01	1.15
6	West Virginia	29%	Nebraska	18%	California	2.83	0.67
7	Oklahoma	27%	North Dakota	17%	West Virginia	2.61	1.08
8	Maine	26%	Louisiana	16%	Arkansas	2.58	0.77
9	Alaska	25%	Maine	15%	Georgia	2.55	0.77
10	New Mexico	25%	Missouri	15%	Oklahoma	2.52	0.87
11	Connecticut	25%	N. Hampshire	14%	Texas	2.48	1.04
12	Vermont	24%	Mississippi	14%	Mississippi	2.42	0.82
13	Mississippi	22%	N. Carolina	14%	Tennessee	2.38	1.03
14	Washington	22%	Michigan	13%	N. Carolina	2.38	0.67
15	Missouri	21%	New York	13%	Massachusetts	2.32	0.52
16	N. Hampshire	20%	West Virginia	13%	Kentucky	2.24	0.7
17	Virginia	19%	Wyoming	13%	Pennsylvania	2.23	0.88
18	Arkansas	19%	New Jersey	13%	North Dakota	2.19	0.47
19	Wisconsin	18%	S. Carolina	12%	South Dakota	2.19	0.8
20	Pennsylvania	18%	California	12%	<b>Kansas</b>	<b>2.19</b>	<b>0.55</b>

The report found that rural roads and bridges in Kansas have significant deficiencies. Thirty percent of Kansas' major rural roads were rated in poor condition in 2013, the fifth highest rate nationally. Traffic crashes and fatalities on rural roads in Kansas occur at a rate significantly higher than all other roads in the state. In 2013, non-Interstate rural roads in Kansas had a traffic fatality rate of 2.19 deaths for every 100 million vehicle miles of travel, the 20th highest rate nationally and nearly four times higher than the traffic fatality rate of 0.55 deaths per 100 million vehicle miles of travel for all other roads in Kansas.

“The TRIP report underscores the importance of a sound transportation system to enhance quality of life and to move our goods around the nation and the globe,” said Michelle Butler, executive director of Economic Lifelines. “If we continue to underfund our transportation program, needed improvements and expansions will not move forward and Kansas could miss out on important opportunities for economic growth.”

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.

“America's rural transportation network plays a key role in the success and quality of life for U.S. farmers and ranchers,” said Bob Stallman, president of the American Farm Bureau Federation. “But deteriorated and deficient rural roads and bridges are hindering our nation's agricultural goods from reaching markets at home and abroad and slowing the pace of economic growth in rural America. Securing the appropriate resources at the local, state and federal levels will allow for the improvements needed to provide a rural transportation system that will keep goods moving, improve quality of life and quicken the pace of economic growth.”

The federal surface transportation program is a critical source of funding for rural roads. However, the current federal surface transportation program is set to expire on May 31, 2015.

“The 61 million people who live in America's rural heartland deserve a transportation system that is safe, efficient and reliable,” said Kathleen Bower, AAA vice president of public affairs. “It is up to Congress to pass a fully funded, long-term bill to improve our nation's rural roads before the Highway Trust Fund runs out of money this summer.”

The TRIP report finds that the U.S. needs to adopt transportation policies 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. To accomplish this, the report recommends modernizing and extending key routes to accommodate personal and commercial travel, implementing needed roadway safety improvements, improving public transit access to rural areas, and adequately funding the preservation and maintenance of rural transportation assets.

“America's rural transportation system enables the farm to market supply chain, supports our tourism and energy industries, and allows for the production of the goods and services that are vital to our nation's economic health and growth,” said Janet Kavinoky, executive director of Transportation and Infrastructure at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. “But years of inadequate transportation funding have left a deficient rural transportation network that does not meet present-day demands. Improving the transportation system will create jobs today and leave a lasting asset for future generations.”

“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 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. “But, with long-term federal transportation legislation stuck in political gridlock in Washington, America's rural communities and economies could face even higher unemployment and decline. Funding the modernization of our rural transportation system will create jobs and help ensure long-term economic development and quality of life in rural America.”