

Rough Roads Growing Despite More Spending

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CARBONDALE -- Decaying roads can have a big impact on drivers, and a new report finds many are falling apart faster than they can be repaired.

Billions of dollars are spent on road improvements every year. Stimulus spending is paying for thousands of projects nationwide.

The report from USA Today and TRIP, a national transportation research group, looks at information from 2008 to 2011.

Their analysis shows Illinois is one of 26 states that have more than 20 percent of roads in "poor condition." That's compared to Kentucky at almost 7.9 percent and Missouri at 6.3 percent.

Stimulus spending has helped improve many roads that see heavy traffic. But even with the extra funds, the number of roads in poor condition is growing.

Potholes on South County Line Road in Carbondale are part of Patrick Morgan's drive everyday.

"It goes into the trailer park where we live," said Morgan. "Everybody that goes in and out of there has to go through that section of road."

It's a stretch of pavement Morgan has seen patched a few times.

"They've poured a little bit of gravel in it," said Morgan. "It doesn't last very long at all."

Morgan hopes it will one day be fully repaired, before it damages his truck or any of the neighbors' cars.

Using Federal Highway Administration data, USA Today and TRIP discovered just 38 percent of roads are in "good condition" nationwide.

In Illinois, that number is even smaller. 32 percent are listed as "good condition." 22 percent were found to be in "poor condition."

The Auto Shop in Carbondale knows the impact of those rough rides.

"They'll just tell us they got a lot of big potholes in their road," said Owner Steve Rennison. "Now they're having these problems."

Suspension and vibration issues make up about a third of the traffic Rennison deals with each week.

"We see a lot more bent rims and damaged tires," said Rennison. "We see a lot of shocks and struts that are wore out."

The repairs can sometimes be expensive.

"A set of front struts can run up as high as 400, 500, 600 dollars," said Rennison.

Until road conditions improve, Rennison believes your best bet is to keep an eye on trouble spots.

"Just reduce your speed," said Rennison. "You know try to look out ahead."

A spokesperson said the Illinois Department of Transportation has made investing in roads and bridges a priority. Around 14 Billion dollars has gone into more than five thousand projects. Those projects are funded through the Illinois Jobs Now! Program. More road projects in southern Illinois are also slated for the near future.

You can view the USA Today and TRIP report here: [USA Today Report](#) .