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<http://finance-commerce.com/2011/06/no-road-work-ahead-shutdown-would-be-bad-timing-for-seasonal-contractors/>

[No Road Work Ahead: Shutdown would be bad timing for seasonal contractors](#)

Minnesota highway contractors are bracing for a possible July 1 state government shutdown that could idle hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of work on state roads and bridges.

A shutdown would come at the worst possible time for contractors who work in a seasonal industry that makes most of its money between July and Thanksgiving and employed 7,555 workers as of April.

"We typically don't show profits until well after July 1, closer to Labor Day," noted Tom Stockert, area vice president for Bismarck, N.D.-based Knife River Corp., an asphalt and ready-mix paving company with two divisions in Minnesota.

http://www.twincities.com/ci_18204150?IADID=Search-www.twincities.com-www.twincities.com
[State Workers Gird For Shutdown](#)

If Minnesota state government shuts down and Mike Hartel and Jeff Clark are laid off July 1, watch out for unpatched potholes and chunks of concrete falling onto Minnesota highways from bridge decks.

Hartel of Columbia Heights and Clark of Little Canada are Minnesota Department of Transportation maintenance workers, and if they aren't doing their jobs, state roads will be "more dangerous and hard on cars," Hartel said.

Last week, state agency heads submitted lists of what they consider "critical services" to Minnesota Management and Budget. Later this month, Dayton and management and budget officials will draft their critical-services list and give it to Attorney General Lori Swanson, who in turn would ask the courts to approve the critical activities. Unless the courts keep the vast majority of agencies open, a shutdown would be by far the most extensive work interruption in state history.

National

<http://www.startribune.com/politics/123505979.html>

[Special Council to Boost Rural Economic Development](#)

President Barack Obama plans to create a special advisory council to recommend ways to boost the economic outlook and quality of life for the estimated 60 million people who live in rural areas of the U.S., a White House official said. Rural residents are eager for better educational opportunities, transportation alternatives, better access to health care and reliable access to the Internet, among other issues.

http://www.twincities.com/ci_18186251?IADID=Search-www.twincities.com-www.twincities.com
[Metro Transit Ranks 16th in Connecting People and Jobs](#)

As the nation's 16th most populous metro region, the Twin Cities offer a little bit of everything, including jobs, workers and public transit.

What it's not doing a top-notch job of is linking the three.

That's the verdict from the Brookings Institution, a nonpartisan public policy think tank based in Washington, D.C. Brookings analyzed 371 transit providers around the country in terms of connecting workers to jobs.

The report, "Missed Opportunity: Transit and Jobs in Metropolitan America," ranked the Twin Cities 39th out of the 100 largest metro areas surveyed - above average but not significantly so.

http://www.twincities.com/ci_18235001?IADID=Search-www.twincities.com-www.twincities.com
[Wisconsin Approves New Policy for St. Croix Bridge](#)

The Wisconsin Assembly passed a bill Wednesday making it easier for the state to fund a new bridge over the St. Croix River between Houlton and Stillwater, Minn.

Senate Bill 26 allows the state to secure money for its share of the \$690 million project without requiring that the project receive federal funding. The bill now heads to Gov. Scott Walker for his signature.

Walker sent a letter to U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood on Wednesday expressing support for the project.

State

<http://finance-commerce.com/2011/06/report-focus-on-road-repair-not-expansion-2/>

Report Focuses on Road Repair Versus Expansion

Smart Growth America and Taxpayers for Common Sense say only about 21 percent of Minnesota's highway spending from 2004 to 2008 went to repair and maintenance of roads.

On average in that period, the state spent \$180 million a year on repairs to existing roads while devoting \$385 million a year to road expansions, according to the study.

Margaret Donahoe, executive director of the Minnesota Transportation Alliance, said the state needs to invest in both maintenance and expansion.

One consideration: During the report's 2004-08 study period, Minnesota had higher-than-average highway expansion because of then-Gov. Tim Pawlenty's Bond Accelerated Program, Donahoe noted.

The program advanced needed expansions to Interstate 494, Highway 212 and other roads, she said. "The bottom line is that the state is not investing enough in either roadway maintenance or expansion," Donahoe noted in an email message. "Our system continues to be underfunded as commuters stuck in traffic and those paying for damage from potholes can attest to."

<http://www.startribune.com/local/east/123509814.html>

Agreement on a Vikings stadium bill must be reached by the end of next week to have a chance of being considered in a special legislative session later this month, two key stadium backers said Wednesday.

The big hurdle, he said, remains how to finance \$131 million the Minnesota Department of Transportation insists is needed to improve and build nearby freeways and roads to handle increased stadium traffic.

Local/Regional

<http://www.startribune.com/local/minneapolis/122934703.html>

The construction crunch along Interstate 94 between Minneapolis and St. Paul is giving some drivers a familiar pain in the backside.

The inside lane and shoulder in both directions will be closed for reconstruction until about late August. The ramp from eastbound I-94 to northbound Hwy. 280 and the ramp from southbound Hwy 280 to westbound I-94 will each be closed for about a week in August. Additional overnight lane closures from Sunday through Thursday also can be expected.

By September, the outside lanes and shoulders will be closed for reconstruction through October. Ramps at Hwy. 55, 5th Street, Cedar Avenue and 25th/Riverside Avenues will be closed temporarily at different times for resurfacing.

<http://finance-commerce.com/2011/06/5-million-gap-delays-van-white-bridge-road-extension/>

North Minneapolis residents have waited for more than a decade to get a \$26 million bridge and road extension project that would help an underserved part of town.

As part of an effort to bring investment to the north side - which also is struggling to recover from a May 22 tornado - the Van White Memorial Bridge project would extend Van White Boulevard past Interstate 394 and improve highway access to the area.

Under the current plan, the northbound bridge will be constructed in the first phase, and the approach road will be realigned to allow for two-way traffic.

Piers and superstructure for the southbound bridge will be in the bid documents as “add alternatives.” If the price is right, the entire two-span project could still be built in one phase.

http://www.twincities.com/ci_18244699?IADID=Search-www.twincities.com-www.twincities.com&nclink_check=1

Road construction on U.S. 8 between Forest Lake and Chisago City will begin next week, and transportation officials warn motorists to expect delays.

Resurfacing work will begin at 8 a.m. Monday and is expected to be complete in mid-July. During the project, the highway will remain open to two lanes of traffic, but vehicles will be ushered through the construction zone by a flagger and a pilot car.

<http://finance-commerce.com/2011/06/bus-back-in-mix-for-bottineau-transit-system/>

The initial study of the best choices for a new transit system in the Bottineau Corridor in the northwest metro area settled on three possible routes and picked light rail over the bus.

Reviewing the findings, the Federal Transit Administration has asked planners to keep “bus rapid transit” in the Bottineau mix.

Other States

<http://www.businessweek.com/ap/financialnews/D9NO1KB02.htm>

Missouri transportation officials approved a plan Wednesday for the state agency to cut jobs, close facilities and sell equipment to boost the money available for road and bridge projects.

The proposal endorsed by the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission calls for eliminating about 1,200 positions, closing 131 facilities and selling 740 pieces of equipment. Among the facilities closing will be district offices in Macon, Joplin and Willow Springs, though about 70 to 80 employees will remain in each of those areas under the supervision of an area engineer.

Transportation officials estimate the plan will save \$512 million by 2015 and \$117 million per year after that.

Some raised concerns about the Transportation Department's ability to continue serving residents while others questioned the fairness of the plan. Several people urged commissioners to wait a few months before making a decision, including a Republican state lawmaker who asked for it to be set aside so he could sponsor legislation next year putting a measure before voters intended to bolster funding for the Transportation Department.

<http://www.greenfieldreporter.com/view/story/0c88eb33d0ec49b6bf77ae96c2510360/AR--Arkansas-Perspective-Analysis/>

Scott Bennett, the new director of the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department, won't just be taking the helm of one of the largest and most high-profile agencies in state government. He'll also be a key salesman for one of the most politically unpopular ideas — raising taxes — as the agency seeks more money for Arkansas roads.

"You always hear that, in these times, you have to do more with less. If that's the case, eventually you'll have to do everything with nothing," Bennett said. "That's not possible."

http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/maryland-transportation-officials-to-hold-1st-public-hearing-on-toll-hike-plan-in-gaithersburg/2011/06/08/AGKI6oLH_story.html

The Maryland Transportation Authority will be holding its first public hearing on a proposal to raise tolls on the state's bridge, tunnels and other roads. The proposals include increasing tolls for passenger cars on the Chesapeake Bay Bridge from \$2.50 to \$5 starting Oct. 1, and to \$8 beginning in July 2013. One-way tolls for the Harbor Tunnel, Fort McHenry Tunnel and the Key Bridge would go from \$2 to \$3.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/virginia-politics/post/fairfax-supervisor-pushes-for-more-public-private-solutions-to-transportation-plans/2011/06/07/AGFnqHLH_blog.html

Fairfax County Supervisor John C. Cook (R-Braddock) is trying to restart efforts to draw up guidelines that would allow the traffic-challenged county to explore public-private partnerships to work on local transportation projects.

To take advantage of Virginia's 1995 Public-Private Transportation Act, local jurisdictions must draw up guidelines for public-private partnerships that specify, among other things, how to deal with solicited or unsolicited proposals. The law is similar to a state measure that has allowed transportation officials to move forward on creating HOT Lanes on the Beltway. Fairfax County has discussed drawing up such regulations but without success.

<http://www.therepublic.com/view/story/ccda9c6639b74d7ca69cefe3d7232168/KS--Kansas-Highway/>

Officials in southwest Kansas are applauding the state's transportation plan that calls for expansion work on southwest Kansas highways.

Four-lane upgrades are planned for U.S. Highway 50 between Cimarron and Dodge City, and for about 10 miles along U.S. Highway 54 from Liberal toward the northeast in Seward County. State officials said the work could begin by 2014.

<http://www.businessweek.com/ap/financialnews/D9NJ8EUO1.htm>

A series of fast-charging stations for electric cars will be installed this year along Interstate 5 in Southern Oregon to become one of the first links in a Green Highway stretching down the West Coast from Canada to Mexico.

The Oregon Department of Transportation announced Wednesday that AeroVironment has been chosen to build eight level-3 DC fast-charging stations between Eugene and the California border under a \$700,000 federal stimulus grant. The Monrovia, Calif.-based company manufactures unmanned aircraft and industrial charging stations for electric forklifts and aircraft tenders.