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212 Roads to Somewhere

The Wisconsin Legislature is deciding this spring whether or not to delay Main Street success in 212 Wisconsin Cities, Villages and Towns. There are 212 state highway rehabilitation projects included in a \$320 million state highway rehabilitation program budget request. The request is being considered this month by the Legislature's Joint Committee on Finance. Each of those projects is a vital piece of a community's economic success. We hope the vote is "Green" for go.

We admit that the "State Highway Rehabilitation Program" is a name only a bureaucratic mother could love. And \$320 million is a lot of money, even within a multi-billion-dollar state budget. What's the connection to downtown Wisconsin? Why should we care?

We do care, because all roads in Wisconsin lead somewhere. For example, one of those 212 projects would resurface Highway 172 in the Green Bay Area; the highway that leads to the Brown County Airport. Another project would replace a critical bridge on Highways 59 and 18 in the City of Waukesha. One more resurfaces the road that runs through the Village of Athens in Marathon County. Project after project affects city after city, village after village and town after town. It's all connected; connected to you and I.

State highways are the links between Wisconsin's 602 cities and villages; they are often the main thoroughfares through those communities. They carry farm products, manufacturing equipment, school buses, ambulances and the tens of thousands of family vehicles traveling back and forth every day. Without a quality network of local, state and interstate roads, it gets harder to get to work, to get to school, and to get emergency services to people who need them.

A few days ago, the WisDOT released the [list of road rehabilitation projects](#) that would be delayed or deferred (deferred means something worse than delayed) if we cannot find consensus on how to pay for them. Take a look at the list; it's long but organized by county. Chances are you'll find a road that you drive on it. Think about that particular stretch of road. What happens to your village if that project doesn't get done next year; or the year after; or maybe just doesn't get done? Whose job is affected; whose school is affected; which ambulance has to be rerouted?

Think about that. Then call your area legislator.

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The League of Wisconsin Municipalities advocates for Wisconsin's cities and villages, large and small, urban and rural, speaking up for local democracy and common-sense citizen led government. Learn more at <http://www.lwm-info.org/>

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