

News

New report gives Michigan roads, dams poor grades

Tuesday, May 12, 2009

By TIM MARTIN
Associated Press Writer

LANSING (AP) — A report released Tuesday gives Michigan dams, roads and other infrastructure systems poor grades.

The review released by the Michigan section of the American Society of Civil Engineers urges the state to invest more money in the deteriorating systems, some of which are in such poor shape they may pose a safety threat.

The report grades Michigan infrastructure related to aviation, dams, drinking water, energy, navigable waterways, roads and bridges, storm water, transit and wastewater collection. All areas were graded either as a 'C' or a 'D.'

Michigan's overall grade was determined as a 'D.'

Kirk Steudle, director of the Michigan Department of Transportation and a member of the civil engineers group, said "it's absolutely embarrassing" to compare this generation's investment in infrastructure to the sizable commitment made by previous generations.

"We have squandered the inheritance," Steudle said. "This report should be a wake-up call."

Michigan's road and bridge woes have been well-documented. About 38 percent of the state's roads are rated as poor or mediocre, and 25 percent of its bridges are rated as structurally deficient or functionally obsolete.

The report cites U.S. Census Bureau data indicating Michigan has ranked among the bottom 10 states in per capita state and local road funding for more than four decades.

The report says more than 90 percent of Michigan dams will reach or exceed their design life, which typically is about 50 years, by 2020. Dam breaks could cause environmental damage and threaten public safety, the report said. In 2003, a dam failure in Marquette County caused an estimated \$100 million in flood damage.

The report says Michigan has about \$6 billion in wastewater and sewer system needs. The report grades the system as a 'C' but notes that many of its parts are aging. More than half of Michigan's 25,000 miles of sanitary sewers, for example, were built before 1970.

URL: <http://www.dailytribune.com/articles/2009/05/12/news/doc4a09c9ab7bc5f880163901.prt>

© 2009 dailytribune.com, a **Journal Register** Property