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"Preserve First" Starting to Make a Difference in Michigan Oct 28, 2004

October 28, 2004 - - Preserve First, the Granholm administration's "Fix it First, Fix it Right" approach to preserving the state transportation system, is proving to make a difference in the condition of Michigan roads and bridges, members of the State Transportation Commission were told today. Preserve First was part of a report presented to the Commission by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) at the Commission's regular monthly meeting.

"Our continued commitment to fixing Michigan's existing roads and bridges, and fixing them right, not only gives us a better transportation system but Preserve First also will support approximately 12,000 new jobs by the end of the 2005 fiscal year," said Gov. Jennifer M. Granholm.

MDOT expects to have 91 percent of state freeways and 84 percent of non-freeways in good condition by 2007 and today is four years ahead of schedule of having 85 percent of non-freeway bridges in good condition by 2008. MDOT expects to have 87 percent of freeway bridges in good condition by 2008.

State Transportation Director Gloria J. Jeff said that the Preserve First strategy of redirecting less than 10 percent of MDOT's highway construction investment to added preservation projects, along with MDOT's strategy of applying a combination of long, medium and short-term fixes, has given MDOT the ability to strategically address system needs in the most cost-efficient manner possible.

"Despite the fact that federal funding continues only at last year's levels, we are making good progress on improving the condition of state roads and bridges," continued Jeff. "Because the federal fiscal situation is so unstable, we are recommending no changes in investment strategy at this time."

"Our FY 2005 program will continue to focus on preserving Michigan's existing transportation system," said Jeff. "At the same time, we recognize the need to balance preservation with economic development concerns, congestion issues, and our responsibility to deliver mobility and access with a comprehensive transportation system that includes public transit, passenger rail, air transport and freight logistics."

Preservation involves repairing an existing pavement or bridge to restore it to a better condition. Major preservation improvements are upgrades to satisfy the latest state and federal requirements and include intersection, signal, and guardrail improvements, lane-width upgrades and/or shoulder improvements, ramp improvements, and bridge work.

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