

5/29/2014

Old 131 project to begin soon to provide needed safety improvements

By Rick Charmoli

CADILLAC — For 13 years, Rhonda Anway has dealt with the good and the bad of having her business on a busy thoroughfare located between Cadillac and Manton.

The Shampooochies owner has seen customers and friends leave her pet grooming and boarding business on Old 131 north of Cadillac and nearly get hit by other drivers. She hears tires squeal constantly and sometimes has cars end up in the front yard of her business.

For 13 years, she has experienced this. Now she hopes a summer construction project will take care of some of the problem on a stretch of road that has been in dire need of repairs for years. The project was bumped up on the Michigan Department of Transportation's schedule because of more than \$2 million that was earmarked from the Roads and Risk Reserve Fund.

During construction of the 2.9-mile stretch of road, Old 131 traffic will be detoured on U.S. 131 between Boon Road and M-42. Access to homes and businesses will be maintained. Construction is scheduled to begin July 7 and should be completed prior to the Labor Day holiday weekend. This work will include pavement replacement, drainage improvements, addition of a left-turn lane at 30 3/4 Road, also known as Haring Road, and elimination of the passing relief lanes on the 2.9-mile stretch of road.

Although the construction will possibly have an impact on her business because of the detour, Anway said she believes it will ultimately be a good thing.

"I believe it is necessary. There have been several accidents on the corner of Haring Road (30 3/4 Road)," she said. "We hear tires squeal constantly (from slamming on the brakes). People heading north to Manton and people who need to turn left onto Haring Road are putting their life in danger."

The project is set to begin on July 7, but MDOT Delivery Engineer Del Kirkby said the contractor for the project will not be known until after June 6 when the project goes to bid. He said the confirmed low bidder will be announced the following week.

Together with the construction starting, Kirkby said traffic also will begin being re-routed on July 7. Motorists will have access to homes and businesses, he said, but those who think they will be able to get through will be mistaken.

"Through traffic will be impossible due to the hill flattening north of 30 Road," he said.

Kirkby said a public meeting will be held to go over the scope of the project and to answer any questions that the public might have. The meeting has been scheduled for 5 p.m. on June 25 at the Haring Township Hall, 515 Bell Ave.

When the project was submitted, MDOT requested the \$10 million it would cost to reconstruct the entire stretch between Cadillac and Manton but was not awarded that amount. The 2.9 miles from Boon Road north to the U.S. 131 overpass is going to be fixed first, because the costs of repairing that stretch of road matched the funding available.

MDOT has broken the entire stretch into three segments. The southern segment will cost \$2 million. The middle segment will cost \$2.6 million and the northern segment will cost about \$3.5 million. If no other funds are made available, the remaining two segments will be completed in 2017.

Once all work is completed, MDOT will turn the roadway over to the Wexford County Road Commission.

Why this story is important:

- The work done on a 2.9 mile stretch of Old 131 between Boon Road and the U.S. 131 overpass will be the first of three construction projects slated for the stretch of road between Manton and Cadillac.

What you need to know:

- Repair work will begin on July 7 and should be completed before the Labor Day holiday weekend.

Full article at: http://cadillacnews.com/news_story/?story_id=1818884&year=2014&issue=20140529