

Why is town road investment important to economic development in Wisconsin?

Asking why town road investment is important to economic development in Wisconsin is like asking somebody why they brush their teeth. Both of these questions seem like they would have an obvious answer; because it is good for you. Doing both is important because it is something people see every day; when you smile people see your teeth that are brushed, when one is driving, they see the road that was invested in to help economically develop Wisconsin. We are inclined to be up to date with our roads because we use them every single day of the year; they are critical for keeping this world going.

I believe town road infrastructure is critical to the current and future economic development of Wisconsin. The main drivers of Wisconsin's \$51.3 billion economy are manufacturing, agriculture and tourism (4). Town roads provide the infrastructure necessary for all three of these drivers to succeed. Manufacturing requires raw materials like milk, grain, livestock, pulp and timber trees, mined aggregate, and workers to flow daily from rural areas to manufacturing centers. Agriculture has finished goods, feed, and fuel flowing back into the rural areas. A variety of service oriented industries also serve the rural areas like crop consultants, machinery sales, waste material handlers and veterinarians to name a few. The tourism sector is fueled by tourists traveling rural roads to view natural attractions, waterways, and stay at resorts and campgrounds. Town roads are critical to Wisconsin's economy.

In addition to the economy drivers described previously, towns spend a significant amount of their annual budget to maintain their roadways and bridges. According to Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) statistics, there are 112,362 miles of public roadway within the state (2). Of that, 61,966 miles are maintained by the towns in which they are located (1). Within the township where I reside, 47.5% (\$220,500) of our proposed 2015 expenses are for town road maintenance and improvement (5). Those activities can include new road construction, chip sealing, hot and cold mix application and road shouldering. The state's private sector highway and bridge industry employs more than 5,700 workers which contribute to the state's economy (3).

In summary, investing in town roads is necessary to maintain the infrastructure that drives Wisconsin's economic future. As we return to brushing your teeth, if you don't brush them and you allow yourself to get cavities, you will pay more to fix that tooth that it would have cost to brush it in the first place. Roads in Wisconsin are the same way; if we allow a pot-hole to keep growing bigger without fixing it, we will be spending more money in the long run, just like the cavity. For continued economic development in Wisconsin, it is necessary to invest in town roads, not only for our generation but for the generations to come.

Biblogoraphy

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