



State of Missouri Team:

I think it goes without saying that it's been quite a year so far – with circumstances coming our way that we certainly couldn't have anticipated.

Like our sister state agencies, MoDOT is a provider of essential services. When COVID-19 entered our state, we quickly went to work to see how we could keep people, goods and services moving. We did this all while maintaining the safety and health of our employees, our partners and the traveling public.

One of our first actions was to coordinate with Gov. Parson's office, federal agencies and our partners in the motor carrier and agricultural industries. We did this to enable emergency flow of goods. This was done by relaxing the hours of operation for motor carriers and easing restrictions. This allowed for heavier-than-normal truckloads of supplies and equipment to travel on Missouri highways.

We've also taken steps to keep our vital highway construction and maintenance programs running. All of this was done while working to minimize the spread of the coronavirus through social distancing, wearing face coverings and working remotely and virtually.

MoDOT employees also participated in a 20 percent furlough and endured salary cuts through the Shared Work Program to combat the loss of revenue that resulted from people driving less due to stay-at-home orders and quarantine mandates. The success of our Shared Work Program would not have been possible without the terrific partnership of our friends at DOLIR!

It was hard to have to make that ask, but their sacrifice allowed us to save \$14 million toward the \$40 million financial hit to our plan caused by COVID-19. Other actions we took to address the revenue shortfall included cutting back discretionary spending on equipment, materials and supplies; slowing new hiring; and delaying advertising of construction projects from March through June. These actions managed cash in the State Road Fund and enabled us to cover the entirety of the financial impact of the pandemic in the early months.

Despite these trials and setbacks, we have been able to deliver a robust construction program in 2020. In fact, in payments to contractors, we are about \$100 million ahead of where we were a year ago. That's important because it keeps money flowing into the economy and people working.

However, we've experienced another downside to the pandemic. This comes in the form of speeding and aggressive and distracted driving on our roads. We have seen a 100% increase in vehicles crashing into our truck mounted attenuators. These are giant crash cushions meant to protect our employees. That's not only an overwhelming figure, but it's also completely avoidable with appropriate driver attention.

Despite traffic volumes being greatly decreased during the spring, 2020 traffic fatalities are on the rise. Already this year, we've seen 698 traffic fatalities. That is an increase of 80 more lives lost compared to the same time last year. Of the vehicle occupants killed in Missouri traffic crashes in 2020, 68 percent were unbuckled. Based on average survival rates, if everyone involved in these crashes had been buckled, more than 144 people who died would still be alive today. Now that citizens have a choice on whether or not to wear a motorcycle helmet, we hope they choose wisely to stay safe and wear a helmet.

You can do your part to help. If you haven't already, please take the Buckle Up Phone Down pledge, which can be found on our website at [www.modot.org](http://www.modot.org). It's important that we as state employees set the highway safety standards for Missouri, as we do for so many other important measures.

Missouri state employees are among the most dedicated, hard-working people I know. Your efforts to keep state government performing at peak levels during this challenging time are to be commended. Just last week, we at MoDOT paid tribute to some of those exceptional employees – the MoDOT men and women who lost their lives in the line of duty - at our eighth annual Day of Remembrance ceremony. It was held virtually due to COVID-19. I invite you to join us in honoring these individuals by watching this touching video: [MoDOT Day of Remembrance](#). I also want to honor those brave state employees in our sister agencies who have recently made the ultimate sacrifice providing care to our citizens and have succumbed to the impact of COVID-19. Your sacrifice will not be forgotten because you are us and we are family.

I am encouraged every day that we will get through this pandemic. We will come out even stronger in state government because of the amazing teams working together to serve the citizens of this great state. We truly are better together!

Thank you for all you do and please stay safe and healthy.

Patrick K. McKenna, Director

Missouri Department of Transportation