

# ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

## St. Charles County roads to get safety upgrades

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**ST. CHARLES COUNTY** — Three of the county's most treacherous two-lane highways will get paved shoulders and other upgrades next year in an effort to reduce traffic crashes, officials said Tuesday.

An estimated \$5.9 million project will add 2- to 3-foot wide shoulders on up to 15 miles of Highways 94, D and DD, state and county officials said.

The rural roads that wind through the Busch conservation area and the county's popular wine country were picked because of their high crash rates and steep roadside embankments.

Crashes have killed 12 people along Highways D, DD, Z and 94 since the start of 2009, state data show.

"That's what really brought this to a head," said Jim Gremaud, area engineer for the Missouri Department of Transportation in St. Charles County. "There are usually about two or three (fatal crashes) a year, but in '09 it was off the charts."

MoDOT is pledging \$4 million toward the project while the county is committing \$400,000. The state also expects to receive donations of construction materials from local contractors. The project could be pared back depending on the bidding process.

Plans include paving shoulders, flattening slopes in the roads, adding rumble strips, laying new asphalt and improving drainage along several stretches of those highways.

The roads designated for improvements are:

- Highway 94 south of Highway D to Defiance
- Highway D from Highway 94 to Highway DD
- Highway DD south of Sommers Road to Highway D

Construction is expected to start next spring and be completed before the end of the year.

Highways 94 and DD have crash rates twice the state average for two-lane highways without shoulders, Gremaud said. Although Highway D's crash rate is lower than Highways 94 and DD, total yearly crashes on Highway D are similar because the road's overall traffic volume is significantly higher.

In January, state workers added temporary gravel shoulders along Highway D from Highway 94 to Highway DD until the state could find money for permanent shoulders. This summer, crews are scheduled to begin a \$1.1 million project to build paved shoulders along a one-mile stretch of Highway DD from Highway 40 south to Frontier Middle School.

At a news conference Tuesday outside the school, state and county officials credited the efforts of the citizens' group Shoulders fOr Safety (SOS), for raising awareness about the dangers of the roads. For months, the group has been pushing local and state officials for improvements to Highways D, DD, Z, F and 94.

Randy Frump, an SOS representative who lost his son Bryan Frump, 26, in a crash Jan. 1, 2009, on Highway D, thanked county and state officials for making the highway upgrades a priority.

"It is time to stop asking and to begin giving thanks to those who helped us make our noble cause become a reality," Frump said.

"I know today that Bryan is looking down on me from heaven and is smiling, and he is proud of his dad and SOS."