

Gov. Evers: Goes on statewide “Pothole Patrol” tour, highlights budget investments

Posted on Thursday, Jun 1, 2023

>> WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)

MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers yesterday concluded his annual statewide “Pothole Patrol” tour that included seven stops across Wisconsin to repair potholes and discuss the governor’s proposed biennial budget investments in local roads and highways. The week-long tour marked the governor’s fourth “Patrol Patrol” circuit since taking office, including in 2019, [2021](#), and [2022](#).

“It was great spending this past week with folks on the ground visiting neighborhoods and fixing the darn roads, and I’m proud of the work we’ve done over the last four years to repair roads and bridges across Wisconsin. But as I’ve seen firsthand this week, our work must continue—there’s more we must do to ensure our state has the transportation and infrastructure we need for the 21st Century,” said Gov. Evers. “With a historic budget surplus, we have a historic opportunity to invest in our communities and their future, and I urge the Legislature to do the right thing and join me by passing a historic budget proposal because safe, reliable infrastructure is critical for our economy, workforce, and the overall well-being of our state for years to come.”

On Thursday, May 25, Gov. Evers kicked off his tour in Platteville, where he filled potholes on Sowden St. between Jefferson St. and N. Water St. He was joined by Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) Secretary Craig Thompson, State Rep. Travis Tranel (R-Cuba City), WisDOT Southwest Region Operations Chief John Steiner, and city officials. Photos from the event are available [here](#) and [here](#).

On Friday, May 26, Gov. Evers continued his statewide tour in Kenosha, where he repaired potholes on 26th Ave. between 85th St. and 87th Pl. He was joined by

WisDOT Secretary Thompson, Mayor John Antaramian, State Rep. Tod Ohnstad (D-Kenosha), city officials, and leaders from the Public Works Department. Photos from the event are available [here](#) and [here](#). Additionally, on Friday, Gov. Evers also repaired potholes on Grace Ct. in Appleton. He was joined by WisDOT Secretary Thompson, Mayor Jake Woodford, State Rep. Lee Snodgrass (D-Appleton), State Sen. André Jacque (R-DePere), leaders from the Public Works Department, and other local officials. Photos from the event are available [here](#) and [here](#).

On Tuesday, May 30, Gov. Evers continued repairing potholes on N. 51st St. between W. Brown Deer Rd. and W. Green Brook Dr. in Brown Deer. He was joined by WisDOT Secretary Thompson, Village of Brown Deer Board President Wanda Montgomery, State Rep. Deb Andraca (D-Whitefish Bay), local leaders, and regional WisDOT staff. Photos from the event are available [here](#) and [here](#). Additionally, on Tuesday, Gov. Evers went to Rhinelander, where he filled potholes with WisDOT Secretary Thompson, leaders from the Public Works Department, regional WisDOT staff, Rhinelander Fire Chief Brian Tonnancour, and other local officials. Photos from the event are available [here](#) and [here](#).

On Wednesday, May 31, Gov. Evers continued his statewide tour in Chippewa Falls, where he repaired potholes on S. Michaud St. between E. Melby St. and S. Prairie View Rd. He was joined by WisDOT Assistant Deputy Secretary Joel Nilsestuen, city officials, and regional WisDOT staff. Photos from the event are available [here](#) and [here](#). Finally, to conclude his “Pothole Patrol” tour, Gov. Evers repaired potholes at the intersection of Lake St. and 8th Ave. N. in Onalaska and held a press conference to promote work zone safety and safe driving habits during the busy summer construction months. He was joined by WisDOT Assistant Deputy Secretary Nilsestuen, Mayor Kim Smith, State Sen. Brad Pfaff (D-Onalaska) leaders from the Public Works Department, and city officials. Photos from the event are available [here](#) and [here](#).

After already improving over 5,800 miles of roads and nearly 1,600 bridges during the governor’s first term, Gov. Evers’ 2023-25 budget initiatives include providing the highest level of funding ever for general transportation aids, which go directly toward helping counties and local communities repair and maintain local roads.

The governor’s comprehensive transportation budget proposal also prepares the state for its future by proposing two new funding sources for the state’s transportation fund and utilizing federal funding to further build out Wisconsin’s electric vehicle charging infrastructure, enabling the state to use \$34.5 million in

federal funds over the biennium, along with potential state funds, to allow greater use of electric vehicles throughout the state.

Unfortunately, earlier this month, Republicans on the Joint Committee on Finance (JFC) voted to remove [more than 540 provisions](#) from Gov. Evers' budget, including several of the governor's proposals to update Wisconsin's infrastructure.

Republicans on the JFC voted to remove the governor's proposals to:

- Use nearly \$380 million of the state's historic nearly \$7 billion surplus to pay down state debt in transportation review bonds to save taxpayer dollars in future debt and interest and focus resources on road improvement and maintenance;
- Restore the ability of cities, villages, and towns to use eminent domain to build pedestrian and bike paths;
- Allow local governments to establish Regional Transit Authorities throughout the state as local governments deem necessary for the benefit of their residents;
- Support employer-sponsored commuting options for workers; and
- Keep roads safe by establishing a new traffic calming grant program, implementing Driver Licenses for All, restoring roadway design considerations known as "Complete Streets," requiring first-time offenders to install an ignition interlock device for all offenses involving operating a motor vehicle while intoxicated, and increasing Wisconsin's seatbelt violation penalty.

A breakdown of the governor's proposals that are still being considered by the JFC to build safe, reliable infrastructure to support an economy and workforce of the 21st Century is available below.

Local Roads and Services

Gov. Evers is proposing:

- Increasing general transportation aids for both counties and municipalities by four percent in calendar year 2024 and another four percent in calendar year 2025, providing the highest level of funding for general transportation aids in the program's history;
- Providing \$50 million in segregated funds annually for an ongoing supplement to the Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP) to increase direct support of local road and bridge projects across the state. Additionally, increasing funding

for the existing LRIP program by four percent in each year of the biennium;

- Increasing state support of mass transit aids by four percent in calendar year 2024 and calendar year 2025 to further support non-drivers' access to employment, healthcare, and recreation throughout the state. Additionally, increasing funding to programs supporting transportation for the elderly and people with disabilities and paratransit;
- Providing \$1.2 million of segregated funds annually to provide matching funds for the Transportation Alternatives Program for small communities; and
- Allocating \$8 million of segregated funds to support local government administration of federal funding opportunities to support local roads, including technical assistance opportunities.

Bridges and Highways

Gov. Evers is proposing:

- Providing \$47.2 million in bonding to begin reconstruction of the Blatnik Bridge in Superior in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Transportation;
- Providing \$50 million in bonding to support the Southern Bridge project on the Fox River in Brown County;
- Directing \$1.2 million in segregated funds for pressing repairs for the Ray Nitschke Memorial Bridge in Green Bay; and
- Investing \$77 million over base in the State Highway Rehabilitation Program.

Road Safety

Gov. Evers is proposing:

- Improving the safety of travel on Wisconsin's highways by providing 35.0 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions for additional state troopers and 10.0 FTE positions for motor carrier inspectors;
- Providing \$16,000 to develop and implement electric vehicle license plate stickers to assist first responders in emergency response for electric vehicles; and
- Invest \$6.5 million to cover the cost of comprehensive driver education for economically disadvantaged students.

Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

Gov. Evers is proposing:

- Establishing a program to utilize federal funding to further build out Wisconsin's electric vehicle charging infrastructure. This action will enable the state to use \$17.1 million of federal funding in fiscal year 2023-24 and \$17.4 million of federal funding in fiscal year 2024-25, along with potential state funds, to allow greater use of electric vehicles throughout the state.

Supply Chain Investments

Gov. Evers is proposing:

- Providing \$16 million in bonding for dredging, seawall reconstruction, and other projects associated with the Harbor Assistance Program; and
- Providing \$20 million in bonding for the Freight Rail Preservation program.

Laying the Foundation for Future Infrastructure

The governor proposes providing two new sources of revenue to fund infrastructure improvements throughout Wisconsin and maintain a healthy transportation fund, including:

- An amount calculated from the state sales tax generated by the sale of electric vehicles; and
- A transfer of a portion of the state sales tax on the sale of auto parts, tires, and repair services.

These transfers will allocate nearly \$190 million from the general fund to the transportation fund over the biennium.