



DAVID PATCH
ROAD WARRIOR

The Blade's Road Warrior advises readers each Sunday where the biggest driving headaches will be throughout the construction season. He'll tell you the locations to avoid and the detours to take.

With the I-75 construction near the DiSalle Bridge now in full swing for the season, I-75 also being worked on in Monroe County, and several more projects getting started in the coming weeks, it's time again for weekly construction reports.

A caller, apparently from the Sylvania area, wants to know if ODOT could shorten the duration of the planned ramp closing at the Monroe Street entrance to southbound U.S. 23 by requiring a bridge-repair contractor to work around the clock. Such a speed-up, the caller said, would give more construction workers jobs — albeit for a shorter time — and reduce the burden on drivers.

The response we got from the state was a familiar one: A shorter deadline for the project could force the contractor to schedule more shifts, but it undoubtedly would have boosted the project's \$749,000 price tag. Exactly how much of an increase that might be, we'll never know, because the project wasn't advertised for bids that way.

We on The Blade's orange-barreled beat are sympathetic to the motoring public's desire to avoid unnecessary detours and other inconveniences, especially in cases like this Monroe ramp, where the alternatives are rather cumbersome. We often challenge ODOT to consider

different ways to do things to reduce projects' impacts.

On the other hand, we have to have some faith that the transportation department is telling the truth when it says it's doing its best to balance inconvenience against the higher cost of compressing work schedules. We also note that in recent years ODOT has shifted toward nighttime construction for many projects, especially resurfacing jobs, to minimize their traffic impact when it's practical to do so.

Concrete work is not so night-shift friendly, since concrete needs time to cure after pouring. Many of the full-time work zones ODOT still sets up, including the U.S. 23 work, involve concrete.

Another concrete job is the upcoming bridge work on the Anthony Wayne Trail that will severely affect South Toledo commuters. We strongly urge the transportation department to reconsider its plan to close the northbound Trail ramp to northbound I-75 for two months this summer during that construction. While the ramp does begin to split off at the Swan Creek bridge, it appears to us that a temporary alignment could be created by building a short piece of temporary ramp just past the downtown end of the structure.

Motorists would have to slow down to turn left onto such a temporary ramp, but considering traffic congestion the project is likely to cause, speed may not be a problem. We'd be very surprised if 50 cubic yards of temporary asphalt (our estimate, not theirs) significantly increased that project's cost.

1. I-75: Two lanes open each way between Wales and South for bridge work. Northbound traffic splits at Wales; use right lane only to exit at Miami or South. Wales and Miami northbound entrances and southbound entrance at South are closed. Single-lane zones may occur on I-75 at night.



2. U.S. 23: Monroe entrance to southbound U.S. 23 closed for 75 days, starting Monday, during bridge work. Use Central interchange or I-475 entrances at Corey or Talmadge instead. Nighttime lane closings on southbound U.S. 23.

3. I-75: Single-lane closings on weekdays and double-lane closings at night on I-75 between the Ohio-Michigan border and I-275 for pavement patching and bridge work.

4. I-475/Salisbury Road: Nighttime lane closings on I-475 at Salisbury for interchange reconstruction work and major widening. Salisbury-Dussel Drive reduced to one lane each way.

5. I-475: Eastbound right lane closed at Auburn, which is closed for bridge replacement until July.

6. Front, Summit streets: Lane closings on both streets near the Craig Memorial Bridge during realignment construction. Dearborn Avenue closed at Front. Ontario and Michigan streets closed at former I-280 trench.

7. U.S. 24: Lane closings between Fallen Timbers and Dutch, with all traffic shifted to the eastbound side, while the east end of the new U.S. 24 expressway is built.

8. Secor Road: Lane closings between Monroe and Laskey for pavement reconstruction.

OFF THE MAP

State Rt. 19: Closed for bridge work in Ottawa County between Toussaint-Portage and Moore roads. Detour via State Rts. 2, 590, and 163.