

## **Work on Miller Road in Flint Township a pain -- but a 'necessity'**

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**FLINT TWP., Michigan** -- Motorists sit there in narrow lanes, stuck in stop-and-go-traffic, only inching forward as red lights turn green and then red again.

Welcome to Miller Road.

One week into a \$10-million road reconstruction project in Genesee County's commercial corridor, the side effects are evident in the lines of red brake lights.

"I was frustrated as soon as I got off the freeway," said Diane Hall, who travels from Rankin to work at Hurley Medical Center. "You're coming home from work and you try to make a quick stop to run an errand and you're instantly tied up in traffic."

Construction began Monday and is being done in sections. Crews are currently working on a strip between Ballenger Highway and Manwaring Drive, reducing the five-lane road to three -- one lane each way and a left-turn lane.

And, not everyone's complaining.

After all, residents have long complained about Miller Road and all its potholes.

"I'm OK with it. They absolutely need to do it," said Monalisa Bissonnette, who visits the area at least four or five times a week. "With all the traffic on this road, it's a necessity."

Bissonnette of Swartz Creek said that because she's familiar with the area, she's learned a few shortcuts that help her avoid some of the construction.

Work there is expected to be completed by June 13, with the exception of the area of Miller between Ballenger and I-75. Crews will begin work on that area and the area between Manwaring and Linden on June 14.

Crews are working directly in front of Yorkshire Plaza and business owners there weren't too worried.

Neighboring subdivisions bring in a lot of shoppers, and repeat customers already know how to get around the construction.

"Business has slowed a little, but for the most part, it's been pretty much the same," said Russ Meyers, manager of Steve's TV & VCR, a sales and repair shop.

Meyers said that on average the store would see 10 to 15 customers a day, but since the construction started foot traffic has been reduced to about eight to 10 people.

"We're only in the first week, though," Meyers said. "It may get worse, but I hope not."

John T. Plamondon, construction manager for the road commission said he's pleasantly surprised by the acceptance of the traffic shift by area businesses.

"I figured the first day we set this up, my phone would be ringing off the hook," Plamondon said. "But I haven't received one phone call."

Construction hasn't yet begun in the area where Rib City Grill is located, but since it began up the road Monday, business has slowed significantly, said Lori Hincka, assistant manager at the restaurant.

"Our sales are down tremendously," Hincka said. "Nobody wants to fight through that traffic to come eat here when they can go eat on a road with no traffic."

Hincka said business this weekend will set the tone for the remainder of the construction period.

"Tonight will be the true test," Hincka said. "We're usually packed on Friday and Saturday, and if we're not busy tonight, it's going to be a long five months."

Hours for the kitchen staff have already been cut, but Hincka said the employees will get them back, at least for Mother's Day.

"I think no matter what, we'll be busy for Mother's Day, she said. "It's a Sunday, so the everyday traffic won't be out, and we've had a lot of request for reservations for that day."

The work on Miller Road will continue until Sept. 15.

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