



MDOT PRESS RELEASE

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Delivering value: M-231 bridge and Plainfield Avenue projects win AASHTO awards

Fast Facts:

- **M-231 is the first new route in the state since M-6 opened in 2004, and will stretch 7 miles connecting M-45 (Lake Michigan Drive) to I-96/M-104.**
- **Plainfield Avenue's seven water quality, or bio-retention, islands were built to bring social, economic and environmental benefits.**

July 29, 2014 -- The Michigan Department of Transportation's (MDOT) M-231 bridge over Little Robinson Creek in Ottawa County, and the city of Grand Rapids' Plainfield Avenue reconstruction project have been selected by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) as winners in the 2014 America's Transportation Awards competition. The awards were presented today at the MAASHTO awards luncheon at the Hyatt Regency Downtown in Indianapolis. The competition was created in 2008 with the support of AAA and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to demonstrate that state departments of transportation are delivering value for our transportation dollars. Projects nominated in this competition are making communities stronger, our economy more efficient and our quality of life better.

As regional winners, both projects will now be considered for inclusion in the "Top Ten" projects in the competition, which will be announced in early September, and these projects will then compete for the Grand Prize and the People's Choice Awards. The Grand Prize winner is selected by a panel of transportation experts, and the People's Choice Award is chosen online by the voting public. Both prizes carry a \$10,000 cash prize to support a transportation-related scholarship or charitable cause.

Plainfield Avenue was selected as the winner in the "Quality of Life/Community Development, Small" category while the M-231 over Little Robinson Creek Project is the winner in the "Under Budget, Small" category. These quality of life projects help connect people to businesses, jobs, health

care facilities, and recreational activities while encouraging a mix of transportation modes, especially non-motorized transportation.

“This is a great example of several agencies and MDOT offices working together to reach a common goal,” said Kirk Steudle, MDOT Director. “Both projects are unique, innovative and will benefit travelers and Michigan residents for years to come. It’s an honor to be recognized.”

The new bridge over Little Robinson Creek is 548 feet long, approximately 30 feet above the Grand River and one of ten bridges being constructed for the new M-231, which is scheduled to open to traffic in spring of 2016.

With the help of a federal enhancement grant, the City of Grand Rapids installed seven bio-retention islands on Plainfield Avenue from Leonard Street to Ann Street. Each island includes water retention areas, bio-retention plantings and pollution filtration systems. The project improves water quality by capturing and treating the first flush of rain water and reduces the flow that enters the storm sewer system. A video showing how the islands work, as well as the partnership between the city, state and local neighborhood association and businesses that made it happen can be seen at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kLYX6tp_6zg.

“I’ve never seen another project like this,” said Breese Stam, City of Grand Rapids Project Engineer. “How it functions, the social and environmental paybacks, and the public private partnerships that made it all come together. The national accolade is icing on the cake.”

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