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Several Severely Damaged Roads Will Take Months To Fix

Friday, 09/23/11 5:50pm

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Steve Zind



AP/Toby Talbot

Engineers from the Maine National Guard work on rebuilding Vermont Route 107 in Stockbridge.

(Host) The Agency of Transportation announced today that an additional 20 miles of flood damaged road have been reopened on Route 100 between West Bridgewater and Ludlow.

The agency says out of 500 miles of state roads damaged by flooding three and a half weeks ago, 55 miles are left to repair.

But as VPR's Steve Zind reports, V-Trans says several projects could take until Christmas to complete.

(Minter) "So as good as all the news is, we still have a lot left before us. And that's why we wanted to bring you. You've got to see it to believe it, to see what we're up against."

(Zind) Serving as tour guide, Deputy Transportation Secretary Sue Minter led a group of reporters to two roads hardest hit by Tropical Storm Irene: Route 131 in Cavendish and Route 106 in Weatherfield.

Along with a section of Route 107 in Stockbridge, they represent the most difficult and long-term road repair projects the state faces.

In Cavendish and Weathersfield, it's not that long stretches of road are missing: It's that the Black River has carried off so much of the ground underneath; leaving canyons where there once were high embankments.

Lieutenant Timothy Sotter of Cincinnati is with a contingent of Ohio National Guard soldiers helping to rebuild the road.

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An advertisement for SAMI Solar Design & Installation. The top part features a photograph of solar panels installed on a roof, with the text "The Same Sun that shines in the summer" and "shines in the v". Below the photo, it says "American Products • Vermont". The address is "24 CENTER STREET IN DOWNTOWN RUTLAND". Hours are "10AM-5PM Mon-Fri or by appointment". Contact information includes "802.775.7900" and "WWW.SAMI". A logo for SAMI is also present.

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A logo for "Public Po News And Notes From Vermont Cities And T". The text "Public Po" is in a large, bold, sans-serif font. Below it, "News And Notes From Vermont Cities And T" is written in a smaller font. The logo is set against a light gray background.

(Sotter) "It was 65 feet deep, about 100 feet long. We're about 40 feet up now. "

(Zind) The Transportation Agency estimates it will take as many as 90,000 cubic yards of fill to rebuild the road bed in places like this. By comparison, a standard dump truck load of about 13 cubic yards seems thimble-sized.

For this project in Cavendish, fill is being hauled from local gravel pits. Other projects are relying on gravel taken from streambeds, which is raising concern.

Joe Flynn of the Transportation Agency is supervising the state highway repairs in Cavendish and elsewhere.

(Flynn) "We have with the Agency of Natural Resources and river management people, we have had to reclaim state property that's been relocated."

(Zind) "You mean land washed downstream?"

(Flynn) "Correct. It's just a fact. And. Frankly, that has to be done, too, because the way in which some of these bars of gravel and sand were left, it would create a hazard that is equal to this or greater for the next rain event we might have."

(Zind) Eighty percent of the Agency of Transportation workforce is involved in post-Irene repairs. Additionally National Guard members from five states and transportation agency resources from New Hampshire and Maine are also lending a hand.

Deputy transportation secretary Minter says in many cases all this work is simply a quick fix and more repairs lie ahead.

(Minter) "We are doing, in most cases, something that we know is short term, to get us to winter. And in many cases, we'll need to come back, revisit what we've done for a longer term fix."

(Zind) Minter says the cost of repairing state highways in the wake of Irene is \$530 million. She says right now federal aid for the repairs is capped at \$100 million.

Vermont's congressional delegation is fighting to raise that figure, but state officials are concerned the effort could fail.

For VPR News, I'm Steve Zind in Cavendish.

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VPR News

Leahy Says PIPA Concerns Unfounded

Thursday, 01/19/12 7:50am
Senator Patrick Leahy introduced PIPA in the Senate. The Senator was not impressed with the self-imposed blackout by Wikipedia Wednesday, and says the concerns he's heard from that site, Google, Facebook and others, are unfounded based on what his bill really aims to accomplish.

Lawmakers Introduce Bills To Manage Rivers

Thursday, 01/19/12 7:34am

Welch Cheers Obama's Rejection Of Oil Pipeline

Thursday, 01/19/12 7:04am

NPR News

Reports: Rick Perry To Quit GOP Presidential Race, May Endorse Gingrich

Thursday, 01/19/12 9:17am
Texas Gov. Rick Perry is going to drop out of the Republican race for the White House, sources are telling The New York Times and CNN. NPR has not independently confirmed the news.

Iowa 'Split Decision' Ominous Sign For Romney As Gingrich Gains Ground

Thursday, 01/19/12 8:54am

Jobless Claims Drop, Inflation At 3 Percent, Housing Starts Cool

Thursday, 01/19/12 8:40am



Vermont To Get \$8.7 Million In USDA Aid

Thursday, 01/19/12 6:06am

Top Stories: Iowa Recount; Kodak's Bankruptcy; Gingrich's Rising Numbers

Thursday, 01/19/12 8:28am

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