

## **Businesses brace for blow on Miller Road**

FLINT TOWNSHIP

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### **Staff report**

FLINT TWP. - Business owners along Miller Road believe its reconstruction is a necessity, but one that will cause a decline in their profits this summer.

"I know they're trying to make it painless, but it's still going to be painful," said Daniel Andrews, owner of Fuddruckers, 2373 Austin Place. "The businesses still have to pay bills and taxes."

Andrews and others gathered last week at the final public meeting on the project to discuss the impact of the busy road's reconstruction. While he acknowledges the necessity and eventual benefits of the reconstruction, Andrews fears the short-term financial losses during his peak summer season.

"We market Miller Road with billboards," Andrews said. "That's how we draw that traffic," he said of I-75. "This is going to discourage that."

Fuddruckers has only one entrance and exit off of Miller Road.

The project will repair Miller Road between Linden Road and Ballenger Highway, a stretch of about two miles. The construction will be split into three phases from May 5 through Sept. 15.

"There is no convenient time to do a road. Short-term, there is going to be adverse impact of traffic flow," said John Daly, manager-director of the Genesee County Road Commission. "But the road will stay for 15 to 20 years."

Daly said the construction will be completed before the peak fall shopping season. The road commission will keep the public informed about the construction through a daily or weekly e-mail service, he added.

In a presentation outlining the reconstruction, construction manager John Plamondon promised three lanes of traffic - a single lane going in each direction plus a left-turn lane - at all times; open driveway access to all the businesses; changeable message signs on I-75; and weekly updates to the public through an e-mail notifier service.

"My main concern is customers getting to the stores," said Mark Kloeckner, owner of Oreck Vacuums, 4270 Miller Road. "I'm going to see how they're going to accommodate the customers so I could pass along the information to them."

Jay Wise, district manager of Northwest Tires and Service, 4545 Miller Road, said the project needs to take place, but he doesn't understand why it's in the summer.

The majority of Northwest's business is from walk-ins, and he's expecting it to suffer with diminished traffic flow.

"If they get it done in the manner they described, I don't see a problem, but there's a lot of 'ifs,'" Wise said. "You don't beat your car up and then get it repaired."

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