

Safety campaign suspends road work for holiday

Drivers will see fewer barrels and barricades on state highways during the Labor Day holiday despite the biggest road construction season in history, the Michigan Department of Transportation says.

M-DOT Director Patrick Nowak said he is suspending all road and bridge construction on state highways except emergency work, detours and construction areas where barriers cannot be conveniently removed.

"This year we are joining with the State Safety Commission's 'Drive Michigan Safely' campaign to help make summer's finale weekend safe and pleasant," said Nowak.

Record numbers of travelers are expected to log a record 900 million vehicle miles from noon Friday, Sept. 2, through noon Tuesday, Sept. 6, M-DOT said. That's about 1.5 percent higher than the previous record of 975 million miles set over the Labor Day

weekend in 1993.

Here are a few areas where traffic still may be slowed over the holiday:

■ **Metro Detroit** — In Oakland County, the right lane of eastbound and westbound I-96 is closed at the Milford interchange. In addition, the eastbound I-96 exit ramp to Milford Road is closed with a detour at Kent Lake Road.

In Detroit, all lanes of northbound I-75 are closed and de-

toured to the northbound Lodge Freeway, to eastbound I-94, then back to northbound I-75.

Southbound lanes of I-75 are closed from Holbrook to Jefferson and southbound traffic is shifted to the northbound I-75 lanes. Seek alternate routes if possible. Watch for posted detours.

■ **Monroe County** — Traffic on US-24 (Telegraph Road) is detoured to I-275 during reconstruction of two bridges over Swan

Creek and Little Swan Creek south of Flat River. The detour adds about 2.5 miles to the route.

■ **Saginaw area** — Traffic on M-46 over the Tittabawassee River is restricted to one lane in each direction.

■ **Flint area** — At Bishop Airport, M-121 (Bristol Road) is closed west of the airport and east of I-69. Motorists take I-69 to southbound I-75 and exit at Bristol Road.

■ **Southwest Michigan** — I-94 is restricted to one lane in each direction for 7.9 miles from Watervliet to Hartford. Near Battle Creek, eastbound I-94 is reduced to one lane at the bridge at F Drive.

■ **Lansing area** — Traffic on I-96 is restricted to one lane in each direction between the I-496 and US-127 interchange and Lansing Road. Take I-496 through downtown Lansing to avoid potential slowdowns.

Salesman from page 9A

The 24-year Hills resident said he did not want a full-fledged conversion, complete with a ramp.

"I wanted to keep as much independence as possible," he said. Synkonis and his wife Dorothy were looking at vans at the dealership when they met Webner.

"We weren't going to buy when we were there," Dorothy Synkonis said. "But we bought it that night."

For Webner, the sale was unusual, in that this conversion did not require a lowered floor or special ramp. What it did require was a hoist in the back for a Joe's scooter, and a railing the length of the van's roof so that Synkonis could walk himself from the passenger door to the back of the van.

"We had to get the railing from a company that sells them for boats," Webner said.

The result has been a good one

■ **'There's no reason why someone who can't use his hands can't drive.'**

Frank Webner

for Synkonis, and hasn't done anything to hurt business at Farmington Hills Chrysler Plymouth.

"I think Frank has found a special niche that most dealerships don't have," said sales manager Vince Kikel. "People are happy with us and they tell someone else. Over time, it adds consistency."

Webner said that although he won't have the volume of sales his colleagues have in boom times, the slump is not as bad either.

"This is a stable, consistent

customer base," he said.

The Synkonises rave about their Dodge van and about Webner. Webner says that although he has a brother who has been wrongly diagnosed with MS, and has a good friend who has Lupus, he did not start out carrying a torch for handicapped people. But he's learning.

"I've had support from everybody," he said. "But I'd like to have people try working in a wheelchair for a day. I think it would make them aware of how hard it is to do things in a wheelchair."

For Synkonis, Webner has helped him gracefully accept a limitation that makes him angry.

"There comes a time when you have to give up the ghost," Synkonis said of his acquiescence to the modified van. "But I don't want to give up either."

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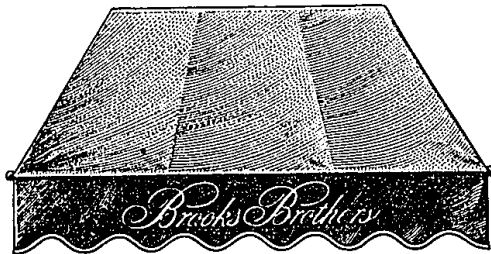
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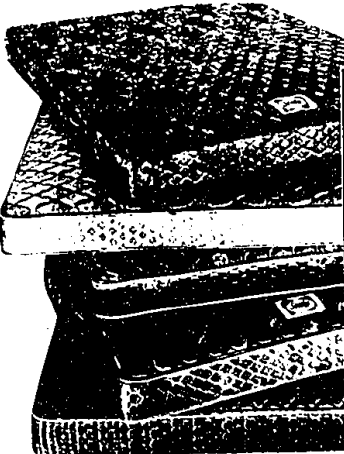
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