

Overdrive's Annual Survey Rates Pennsylvania Roads "Most Improved"

Overdrive Magazine's 13th annual truck drivers' survey of the best, worst and most improved roads in the U.S.A., rates Pennsylvania with the most improved roads in the nation.

Survey participants are *Overdrive* readers averaging 21 years of commercial driving experience. Factors identifying bad roads include potholes, patches and cracks in the pavement, congestion, heavy traffic and lengthy reconstruction.

Most Improved

The states that truckers said had the most improved roads are Pennsylvania, Louisiana, Texas, and Illinois. By individual road segment, truckers say that I-80 in Pennsylvania is the most improved, second is I-20 through Louisiana, third is I-55 through Illinois, fourth is I-10 through Texas, and fifth is I-81 through Pennsylvania.

Best Roads

States that truckers said had the best roads were 1) Florida, 2) Tennessee, 3) Georgia and Texas, 4) Pennsylvania and 5) Indiana. By individual road segment, truckers ranked I-75 through Florida as best, I-75 through Georgia as second, I-10 through Texas as third, I-40 from Memphis to Knoxville as fourth, and I-39 from Bloomington to Rockford, Illinois, as fifth.

Worst Roads

Truckers rated 1) Arkansas, 2) Illinois, 3) Pennsylvania, 4) Louisiana, 5) New York and Michigan as having the worst roads. By individual segment, I-40 through Arkansas was ranked worst, I-94 in Chicago was second, I-10 through Louisiana was third, I-70 from Kansas City to St. Louis was fourth, and I-30 from Little Rock to Texarkana was fifth.

A question in the minds of many readers may be how Pennsylvania can be ranked among the five best roads and the five worst roads, and be rated most improved, all at the same time. The answer is that several years ago the Pennsylvania DOT (PennDOT) made a serious commitment to improve the ride quality of its roads. Several things happened to make that commitment a reality. The most important was a \$.035 per gallon gas tax dedicated to road improvements. PennDOT took that money plus federal funds and over the last three years have invested it in overlaying Pennsylvania interstate and primary roads with hot mix asphalt.

Winning Recipe

Except for one 5-mile stretch, Pennsylvania's entire interstate system was originally Portland cement concrete (PCC). Until PennDOT began overlaying the system with hot mix asphalt, most of its interstate/primary

system was in fair to poor condition.

A typical PennDOT overlay of a PCC interstate or primary road consists of patching up to 10 percent of the deteriorated PCC, placing a leveling course, then a 2-inch-thick binder course, and topping it with a 1.5-inch surface course. This recipe, along with some record years of hot mix asphalt production in the state, have dramatically improved Pennsylvania's highways.

As the number of interstate and primary PCC miles overlaid—or rubblized and overlaid—increases, the International Rating Index (IRI) number, which measures smoothness, keeps getting better. PennDOT officials are smiling and so are the truckers and motorists who travel Pennsylvania's roads. ▲