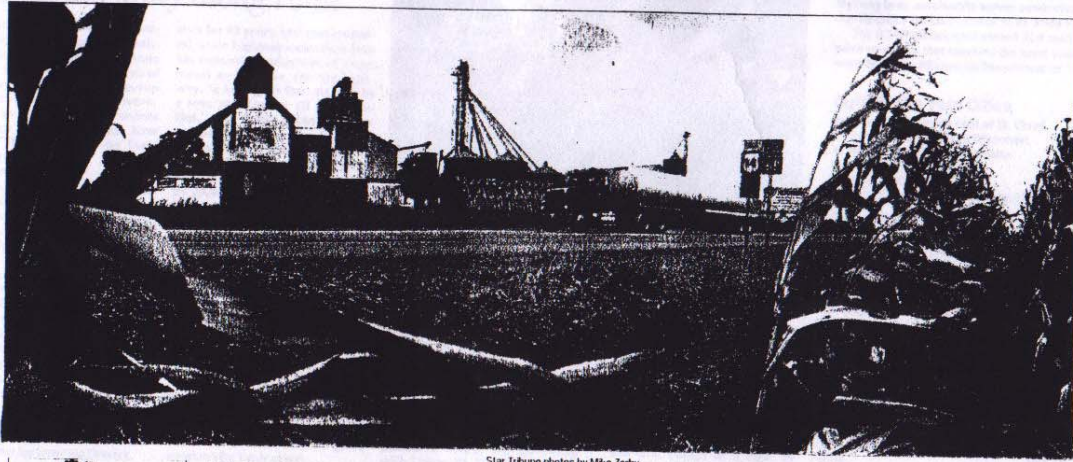


History paved with problems



Star Tribune photos by Mike Zerby

ESSIG: Hwy. 14 and its accompanying semitrailer trucks snake through southern Minnesota's agricultural heartland, where corn and soybeans are starting to fill bins like those at Brown County Feed Service, above.

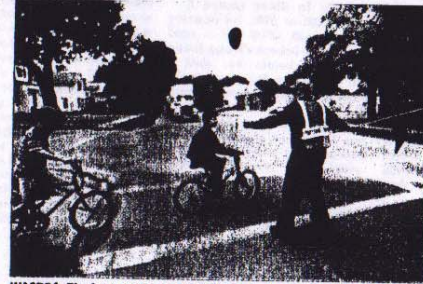


FLOWVILLE: Debris and prose mark the site of historic pledges of crop price supports in the 1952 presidential race.

Highway 14's rolling lanes and colorful past are clouded by complaints about a crowded, treacherous road and its seemingly eternal state of flux and disrepair.



Star Tribune map



WASECA: The busy route can be a challenge for crossing guards at Central Intermediate School. A bypass south of town is planned for sometime in the next decade. Les Wells (guiding bicyclists Ben Roycraft, left, and Hector Rios above) says it's needed now.

By Robert Franklin
Star Tribune Staff Writer

ALONG HWY. 14 IN MINNESOTA — Classes are out for the day, and crossing guard Les Wells has helped the fourth-, fifth- and sixth-graders across the city street that carries busy Hwy. 14 past Waseca Central

Intermediate School.

With 18-wheel semitrailer trucks rolling through, there are times when he ponders, "How do I get my kids across there?"

A 75-year-old guard was hit and hurt badly at the same crossing a year ago by a driver who said he was blinded by the morning sun. But, on one re-

cent day, a big truck stopped before Wells even had a chance to drop his flag so a couple of young bicyclists could cross.

Hwy. 14 is not just a city street, of course. It's also a rural highway, interstate alternative and small-town Main Street, slicing through mid-America from Chicago to Yellowstone.

And, for the second consecutive year, it has been named the worst nonmetro highway in Minnesota in an admittedly unscientific survey conducted at the State Fair by the Minnesota Highway Construction Industry Council.

That's despite the Minnesota Department of Transportation's

pouring millions of dollars into making the road wider, safer and, in some cases, speedier — especially in the Rochester-to-Mankato corridor that has elicited most of the complaints.

HIGHWAY continues on B10:
— A list of other bad Minnesota highways.

