



## **First 5 Pothole Payback winners announced in Michigan**

*By Justin Hicks, 5/22/25*

George Mathew of Allen Park was driving home after the birth of his daughter when he hit a pothole on an off-ramp, resulting in a torn tire and dented wheel.

Through the Michigan Infrastructure and Transportation Association (MITA), Mathew is getting up to \$758 to cover the damages as part of the three-month Pothole Payback Contest.

Mathew was one of the first five contest winners announced Thursday morning, May 22. The others were Dequontay Fisher of Flint, Jake Losey of Kentwood, Marie Smith of Traverse City, and Michael Shine of Detroit.

MITA plans to select five more winners each for May and June. Applications will be accepted through June, [here](#).

“Hundreds of Michigan residents have submitted Pothole Payback entries, and every story we receive is a powerful reminder of how urgently we need to fix our roads,” said Rob Coppersmith, executive vice president of the Michigan Infrastructure & Transportation Association.

“These winners represent thousands of residents who are paying the price for inaction on road funding. It’s time for the Michigan Senate to step up and pass a long-term road funding plan. Every delay hurts families, workers, and communities.”

**Related:** [More Michiganders can get \\$758 pothole payments in May](#)

Shine said he had to abandon his car around 2 a.m. after hitting a deep pothole on the Lodge ramp in Southeast Michigan. He was left riding on his rim due to the damage.

Fisher hit two massive potholes on Milbourne Avenue, blowing a strut and bending a rim as he turned off his street in Flint. Losey blew two tires and dented both wheels after driving through a “crater-sized” pothole.

Despite reportedly driving slowly, Smith said a swath of potholes in the Traverse City area took out her rear shocks and sway bar links.

The contest received more than 200 similar stories as of mid-May. The association created the contest to shine a light on the [state’s road funding shortcomings](#) and the effects of poor road conditions on Michigan drivers.

In addition to the winners' names and brief summaries of their pothole stories, MITA shared each resident's Senate district and its percentage of roads in poor condition. In all five cases, that percentage was at least 31%.

MITA picked \$758 for its maximum reimbursement amount because it's the average cost of vehicle repairs due to poor road conditions according to a 2024 [report](#) from the Washington D.C.-nonprofit TRIP.

However, those average costs from driving on Michigan's [rough roads](#) are higher for residents in busier urban communities like Detroit (\$1,148), Flint (\$1,136), Lansing (\$940), and Grand Rapids (\$898), according to the TRIP report.

Previous entries to the contest will be eligible for the May and June selections without having to re-submit. One submission is allowed per driver, per month.

By entering, participants give MITA permission to use submitted photos and their story on social media and campaign materials.

A proposed long-term funding solution for Michigan roads passed the state House in March but has not yet been considered in the Senate.

For more information on the contest, visit [FixMiState.org](https://FixMiState.org), or email questions to [fixmistate@gmail.com](mailto:fixmistate@gmail.com).