



The Road Newsletter, Volume 7, Issue 5

May 2017

## Winter Savings a Warm Welcome



The 2016/2017 winter season has ended and the Road Commission is pleased to announce that the light winter has provided some savings from the winter maintenance budget covering over 426 miles of primary roads and 1,261 miles of local roads. The budget for winter maintenance is developed based on average historical costs. The following summarizes this past season's savings:

### Primary Road

Budget = \$1,200,000

Actual = \$ 906,155

**Savings = \$ 293,845**

### Local Road

Budget = \$1,500,000

Actual = \$1,098,688

**Savings = \$ 401,312**

The total winter maintenance savings was **\$695,157**.

In addition, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) contracts the Road Commission to perform winter maintenance along the state trunkline system within Ottawa County. The 2016/17 state trunkline winter maintenance budget was \$1,400,000 with an actual expenditure of \$1,153,243.

A major component of the winter maintenance cost is road salt. While the Road Commission continues to explore cost-effective methods to reduce the amount of road salt usage without compromising public safety, road salt can still contribute to over 40% of the winter maintenance cost.

### 2015/2016 Road Salt

Usage: 18,860 tons @\$66.63/ton = \$1,256,642

Allocation: 21,000 tons

### 2016/2017 Road Salt

Usage: 16,115 tons @\$49.27/ton = \$793,986

Allocation: 21,000 tons



The Road Commission Board will look to utilize the winter maintenance savings for culvert replacements, re-graveling, bituminous resurfacing, and other surface treatments to improve the county road system.

# Federal Gas Tax Fuels Road Commission Projects

The Road Commission relies on federal funding, generated by the 18.4 cent federal gas tax that is paid at the pump, to supplement primary road improvements. Those federal funds that come to Michigan through the gas tax are split with 75% of the funds going to the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), and the other 25% divided among the road agencies in the 83 counties plus the 533 cities and villages. These federal funds are then channeled through metropolitan planning organizations (MPO) or rural task forces for use on transportation improvement projects.



MPO's and rural task forces were developed to ensure that existing and future expenditures of federal funds for transportation projects and programs are based on a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive planning process. Representatives from local government and transportation authorities make up the structure of both groups. The Road Commission works with three MPOs: Grand Valley Metro Council (GVMC), West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC), and Macatawa Area Coordinating Council (MACC).

## *2017 Primary Road Improvements with Federal Funding*

**28<sup>th</sup> Avenue:** Baldwin Street to Bauer – The resurfacing of the existing 36 foot wide 1 mile segment of roadway located in Georgetown Township with anticipated construction in August.

Estimated Construction Cost of \$520,000 with Federal Aid allocated from GVMC of \$298,000 with the balance from the Road Commission.

**68<sup>th</sup> Avenue:** Fillmore Street to M-45 – The resurfacing of the existing 30 foot wide 2 mile segment of roadway and the addition of turn lanes located in Allendale Township with anticipated construction in July.

Estimated Construction Cost of \$1,010,000 with Federal Aid allocated from GVMC of \$200,000 with the balance from the Countywide Road Millage Funds.

**112<sup>th</sup> Avenue:** Cleveland Street to Wilson Street – The resurfacing of the existing 30 foot wide 3 mile segment of roadway located in Crockery Township with anticipated construction in May.

Estimated Construction Cost of \$850,000 with Federal Aid allocated from the Regional Rural Task Force of \$616,672 with the balance from the Road Commission.

**174<sup>th</sup> Avenue:** Van Wagoner to Wilson Street – The resurfacing of the existing 30 foot wide 1.53 mile segment of roadway located in Spring Lake Township with anticipated construction in June.

Estimated Construction Cost of \$625,000 with Federal Aid allocated from WMSRDC of \$298,000 with the balance from the Road Commission.

**Adams Street:** 88<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 64<sup>th</sup> Avenue – The resurfacing of the existing 24 foot wide 3 mile segment of roadway and the addition of 3 foot paved shoulders located in Zeeland Township with anticipated construction in July.

Estimated Construction Cost of \$1,438,200 with Federal Aid allocated from the MACC of \$750,000 with the balance from the Road Commission.

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# Confusing Bill Could Impact Local Control of Water Pipes

A special interest group supported by the plastic pipe industry is promoting legislation to force their products on owners of water and wastewater systems. Senator Rick Jones (R-Grand Ledge), the sponsor of SB 157, has suggested that his bill be called the “*Engineering Freedom Bill*”, because it will allow engineers to specify the best and least costly materials for public works projects. The bill also prohibits a public entity from adopting or enforcing an ordinance that:

- **Allows the professional judgement of the project’s engineer to select any acceptable pipe that meets the requirements of a project, or**
- **Prohibits the usage of pipe and piping materials that meets a very broad set of standards (ATSM, AWWA & NSF).**

Many have recognized that SB 157 is a confusing piece of legislation that will make it harder for engineers to use their professional judgement. It will also take away local control on local projects. Eleven other states have considered and rejected similar legislation promoted by the plastic pipe industry.

Many stakeholders are opposed to the bill. The Michigan Township Association expressed concern regarding the preemption of local ordinances, as well as the bill’s confusing definitions, such as “ordinance” and “public funds”. Many engineers testified that many of the bill’s requirements were very unclear and unnecessary since a process already exists to make changes to a utility’s standard specifications.

The Senate Michigan Competitiveness Committee heard testimony from stakeholders on March 22 and approved the bill. Senator Rebekah Warren (D-Ann Arbor) voted against the bill and stated she thought the bill was “a solution in search of a problem.” The Road Commission agrees with this assessment and encourages you to contact your Senator to oppose SB 157.

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## Safe Roads for Everyone

When a construction project impacts the normal use of a county road, warning devices such as barrels, signs, and arrow boards are placed in accordance with a traffic control plan.

The basic objective of a traffic control plan is to permit construction work within the county road right of way in an efficient and effective manner, while maintaining a safe, uniform flow of traffic.

Work in the construction zone, along with motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians traveling through the work zone, must be given equal consideration when developing a traffic control plan. Each traffic control plan is developed to be consistent with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).



The Road Commission relies on the cooperation of various news media in publicizing the implementation of major road closures and detours as a method of keeping the public well informed. The latest information concerning road closures and/or detours on county roads can also be found on our website, [www.ottawacorc.com](http://www.ottawacorc.com).

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## Important Dates

Thursday – May 11, 2017 | 9AM | Board Meeting

Thursday – May 25, 2017 | 9AM | Board Meeting



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PO Box 739  
Grand Haven, Michigan 49417  
616-842-5400  
Office Hours: Monday-Friday; 7:30AM-4PM



STAY CONNECTED. SUBSCRIBE:

The Ottawa County Road Commissioners: Tom Bird | Tom Elhart | Betty Gajewski | Tim Grifhorst | Jim Miedema  
Managing Director: Brett Laughlin

***Who manages the roads and how are they funded?*** The Ottawa County Road Commission manages the roads--not the Ottawa County Board of Commissioners or County staff. The Ottawa County Road Commission is primarily funded by fuel taxes and vehicle registrations. Concerns about roads should be directed to the Ottawa County Road Commission. Questions? [Contact Us](#)

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