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Did You Know?

Source: County Road Association; November 12, 2014

From 1936 to 2006 a dozen counties adopted a total of 13 countywide road millages - about one every six years. Over the last eight years, 16 more counties have passed countywide road millages. Several others have attempted to pass millages and failed.

In this fall's General Election, three new countywide road millages were adopted, one millage was increased and another new millage failed. New millages passed in Eaton County by a 51 percent margin (1.5 mills for 12 years), in Otsego County by a 55 percent margin (1 mill for 10 years) and in Ottawa County by a 58 percent margin (.5 mills for 10 years). An increase of one mill over four years passed in Midland County with 59 percent support. Lapeer County's effort to secure 1.85 mills for six years failed with only 46 percent supporting the initiative.



Managing Director's Message

On October 24, 2014 we accomplished our first "Road Tour" highlighting the great work by our Kalamazoo County Road Commission (KCRC) team, local partners and industry in 2014. This was our first bus tour of projects since I have been at KCRC. Overall we were pleased with the tour and participation. Our KCRC team worked hard to ensure an educational, valued event and to appreciate the time commitment from each of our guests to attend. The tour highlighted some key information from our 2014 construction season:

- Primary Miles Paved: 13.99
- Primary Miles Chip Sealed: 25.27
- Local Miles Paved: 11.43
- Local Miles Chip Sealed: 49.38
- Bridges Rehabilitated: 1
- New Bridges: 1
- Total Projects Managed by KCRC: 134

As we toured and visited our miles of improved infrastructure across Kalamazoo County, we can't forget the "rest of the story". Currently, we have roads PASER rated (pavement surface evaluation rating 1 - 10, 1 being the worst and 10 being the best) in **failed** condition throughout the county:

- Primary Roads:
 - 0 Miles Rated 1 Failed
 - .51 Miles Rated 2 Failed
 - 8 Miles Rated 3 Failed
 - 14 Miles Rated 4 Failed
 - Local Roads:
 - 11 Miles Rated 1 Failed
 - 43 Miles Rated 2 Failed
 - 65 Miles Rated 3 Failed
 - 73 Miles Rated 4 Failed
- } 22.51
} 192

These failed roads are in need of extensive improvements beyond the budget of KCRC and/or local partners. These are roads where improvements must be delayed in order to maintain our other roads in good condition. These are roads that put a strain on our routine maintenance budgets in repeat patching. These are roads citizens want improved, but many cannot support funding. These are roads that we want to improve and struggle with competing priorities and needs throughout the county. These are roads on the local system which require a funding match.

Governor Rick Snyder has advocated for legislative action on road funding since the fall of 2011. Now, three years later, the House and Senate have the option to complete a transportation package. According to the Michigan Transportation Asset Management Council, every day the dollar amount needed to bring Michigan roads back to good condition increases by nearly \$3 million. Continued deterioration of state and county roads increases the cost to fix Michigan roads by \$1 billion annually. While the initial proposal Gov. Snyder offered in 2011 was for \$1.2 billion in new revenue annually, experts agree this figure is already \$2.1-\$2.5 billion and growing daily. This doesn't have a direct effect on local failed roads.

As we applaud all our efforts to maintain and improve our infrastructure, the rest of the story may be "Pay now or pay a lot more later".

As this is the last newsletter for 2014, we would like to thank Commissioner Jeffrie Maddox for all his years in public service as a Road Commissioner. Commissioner Maddox was originally appointed to the road commission in January 2005. He served as Chairman of the Board in 2007, 2008 and 2009 and as Vice Chairman in 2005 and 2006. He was part of the team who hired me at KCRC and his support, expertise, wisdom and dedication to KCRC will be missed. We wish him all the best and sincerely thank him for his contributions to improving the infrastructure in Kalamazoo County.

Joanna I. Johnson, Managing Director

Northern Long-Eared Bat to be Placed on Endangered Species List: How Does this Affect Your Project

Source: Michigan Department of Transportation; March 12, 2014

The Northern Long-Eared Bat (NLEB) is being placed on the endangered species list this fall (approximately November 1, 2014) due to the decimation of the species from "White-Nosed Syndrome".

This has implications for all MDOT construction projects that go through MDOT's Local Agency Program (LAP) because local agencies must comply with the federal Endangered Species Act. After November 1, 2014, if tree clearing takes place between October 15 and March 31st (NLEB hibernation period) the project can receive Natural Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) classification.

Prior to environmental certification, the Environmental Services Section must complete consultation and receive concurrence from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). This Informal Consultation process may take in excess of 30 days.

For tree clearing activities planned to occur between April 1st and October 14th, the Environmental Services Section cannot classify the project until they show USFWS that the NLEB is not present in the area of tree removals. There two phases of study needed to prove the bat is not present:

- Completion of a habitat level assessment - A qualified biologist would field review the project area and assess the trees for their potential to serve as bat habitat. The NLEB has a wide range of habitat including live or dead trees greater than three inches in diameter with cracks, crevices, holes, or exfoliating bark, so almost any tree could be habitat. Habitat assessments can occur in any season. If the assessment does not identify suitable habitat the project can be classified following completion of informal consultation with USFWS.
- Field survey for the presence /absence of the NLEB - Typically this is done using acoustical recording, mist netting or other scientifically approved methods between May and August. If the survey does not locate a bat or bats, then informal consultation would be completed and NEPA classification can occur. If the bat is present, Formal Section 7 consultation with the USFWS will be initiated. This process typically takes 18 to 24 months to complete. Once consultation is complete, NEPA classification can occur.

For Frequently Asked Questions regarding this issue, please view:

http://saferoutesmichigan.org/userfiles/file/funding_information/submit_funding_app/Mar%205%2014%20NLEB%20FAQ%20MMB.pdf



WINNERS OF THE "PUT THE BRAKES ON FATALITIES DAY" POSTER CONTEST

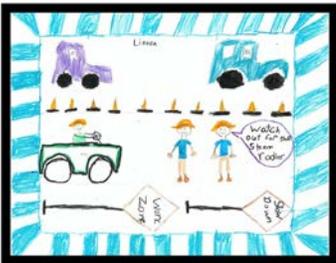
In support of "Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day", the Kalamazoo County Road Commission (KCRC) sponsored a poster contest to bring awareness to driving distracted. Kids age 5-13 were asked to demonstrate what "Put the Brakes on Fatalities" meant to them. The winners are; Lily Moaiery (6), Linnea Hohm (8), Ava Moaiery (9), Abigail Vliestra (9) and Garrick Hohm (11). Prizes were awarded at the KCRC office on Monday, October 13th.



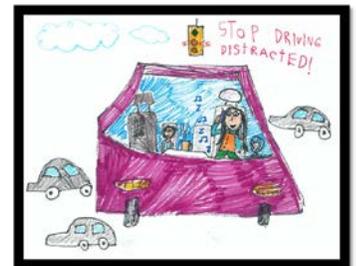
Ava Moaiery (9) of Kalamazoo won OVERALL 1st Place. Ava's poster illustrated a child on a bike asking people to not text and drive, because she wants to stay alive.



Garrick Hohm (11) of Kalamazoo won the 1st place prize in the 11 to 13 year age group. Garrick's illustration shows the importance of paying attention in a construction zone.



Linnea Hohm (8) of Kalamazoo won the 1st place prize in the 8 to 10 year age group. Linnea's illustration is of a work zone and the workers having to be extra attentive to their surroundings.



Lily Moaiery (6) of Kalamazoo won the 1st place prize in the 5 to 7 year age group. Lily's illustration showed the importance of focusing on driving instead of being distracted by music.



Abigail Vlietstra (9) of Portage won the 2nd place prize in the 8-10 year age group. Abigail's illustration reminds all drivers to put the brakes on fatalities.

KCRC thanks our five winners for participating and we look forward to those who submit art next year!

The goal of Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day is to unite the country in achieving one full day of zero traffic deaths by encouraging safer behavior and actions, promoting safer roadways and vehicles, and creating improved ways to handle medical emergencies and enforcement of traffic regulations. "Motor vehicle fatalities are the leading cause of death for all Americans from three to fourteen years old, by working together in a concerted effort, we can make a difference by reducing to zero the number of fatalities occurring on our nation's roads," said Joanna Johnson, KCRC Managing Director.



2014-2015 WINTER MAINTENANCE



As part of the KCRC's on-going winter maintenance assessment for the 2014-2015 winter seasons, we have identified a level of service adjustment to provide improved and advance coverage during peak travel and commute times. KCRC has incorporated a 3 shift program;

4:00p.m.

12:00a.m.

7:30a.m. (also available at 4:00 a.m. if necessary)

These changes incorporate our limited staffing and equipment for optimal coverage during winter storms. The priorities within these shifts will continue to be;

**Designated snow route roads,
balance of primary roads,
through local roads,
subdivision or plat streets,
and dead-end and cul-de-sac roads.**

One important fact has not changed, road crews must have ample room in order to safely clear the many miles of roadway of snow and ice. "Snowplows Need Room to Groom!"

The KCRC offer the following reminders for motorists:

- Snowplows have limited visibility and drivers cannot see directly behind their trucks
- Snowplows often throw up snow clouds, reducing visibility on all sides of the truck
- To remain focused on driving, motorists should not text or talk on cell phones while they are behind the wheel
- Motorists should never attempt to pass a moving snowplow on the right. With new wing-plow technology the blade can clear the shoulder and the lane of travel simultaneously. Motorists attempting an illegal pass through a snow cloud on the right and/or shoulder of the road most likely won't see the plow blade and run the risk of a serious crash
- Always wear your safety belt and allow extra time to reach your destinations this winter.

Remember – in Ice and Snow, Take it Slow!

Help us also educate the children on the risks presented by snowplows and the dangers of playing on the high piles of snow and ice that are near the roadway during snow removal –

- Please **KEEP THE CHILDREN AWAY** from roadside piles of snow
- Don't build snow forts, make tunnels, or play in or on snow banks next to roads
- Keep away from the edge of the roadway as you wait for the school bus, get the mail, or watch the plow trucks
- Stay away from the end of a driveway when a snow plow is approaching
- Hidden objects under the snow, when thrown by the plow truck could cause serious injury
- Keep sleds and toys away from the roadways at all times

REMINDER:

• MCL 257.677a prohibits pushing snow and ice onto, or across, roadways and requires that people do not obstruct the safety vision of motorists.

Helpful Hints to Avoid the Winter Woes



Shake, Shake, Shake, Shake your Mailbox

Governor Rick Snyder proclaimed Saturday, October 18th as the 6th Annual “Shake Your Mailbox Day” in Michigan in an effort to remind citizens the importance of an annual inspection to ensure their mailboxes are able to withstand winter. In most instances where mailboxes are damaged the snow plow doesn’t actually hit the mailbox, the force of snow thrown from the roadway is enough to knock down a loose mailbox. Damage to these posts and receptacles can often be prevented by proper routine maintenance. Taking time to tighten screws and secure mail receptacles now can prevent serious headaches later, if the mailbox moves when shaken, the mailbox and/or post may not withstand standard snow removal operations and should be repaired or replaced prior to the onset of winter.

The KCRC regrets any damage to mailboxes and/or supports that occur as a result of road maintenance activities. KCRC will not assume responsibility for mailbox damage that may be caused by snow/ice that is being plowed from the roadway. An owner must clearly demonstrate the damage was caused by direct contact by road commission equipment to receive consideration of a claim settlement per policy.

Remember to give your mailbox a good shake – and if it moves, it might be a good idea to replace before winter sets in!

Shoveling Your Driveway to Avoid Snow Berms 101

When shoveling your driveway make sure to clear a spot to the left to allow for the snow plow to deposit snow, this will help prevent extra snow from ending up in your freshly shoveled driveway.

A smart way to shovel your drive

How to reduce the possibility of getting a huge pile of snow in your driveway opening when snowplows clear your street:



Keep Street Parking to a Minimum

In an effort to keep your car safe and your roads cleared KCRC asks residents to limit street parking in the winter months. With heavy snow it is often difficult to tell whether the white mound on the side of the road is a car or a pile of snow.

By parking off the street you reduce the risk of your car being hit by a plow, and the risk of being plowed in.

When it snows – park off the roads!



Limit the Time Trash and Recycling is at the Curb



When possible place trash/recycling bins at the curb after the plow has gone down your street and remove from the curb as soon after pick up as you can. While this is not always an option, making the extra effort to do so will help save you a headache in the long run! Due to the force of snow coming off a plow blade empty bins (and occasionally full) are knocked over and pushed back into people’s yards. By limiting the time a bin is curbside will help prevent this from happening.

What is Storm Water Runoff?



One of the most significant, yet unrecognized groups of water contaminants is *storm water pollutants*. When it rains, storm water runs over yards, roads, highways, parking lots, parks and playgrounds, carrying with it everything in its path, including debris and pollutants. Eventually, the water will travel to a stream, either over land or via a storm drain. Storm drains are frequently located alongside streets parking lots. Unlike sanitary sewers that divert water to a treatment plant directly from your home, storm drains lead directly to surrounding lakes and rivers without any type of treatment. All the debris and pollutants that were picked up by storm water runoff end up in your lakes and streams!

Where Does the Pollution Come From?

Most contaminants are made up of common items used by residents, businesses and visitors, such as fertilizers, car oils and greases, yard clippings, soil and pet wastes. Below are some tips you can follow to help keep pollution from entering lakes and streams via storm water runoff.

Tips to Keep Our Rivers, Lakes and Streams Clean

- Never dump anything down a storm drain!
- Use an oil pan when changing oil to keep fluids off the pavement. Check local body shops and quick lubes to find a place to appropriately dispose of used oil.
- Dispose of pet wastes in a trash can.
- Leave grass clippings on your lawn as an alternative nutrient to fertilizer. If a fertilizer is necessary, choose a slow-release product and test your soil to find out how much fertilizer your lawn actually needs.
- Wash your car on your lawn so excess water, chemicals and dirt is filtered through the lawn.
- Keep household hazardous wastes, such as harsh cleaners, paint, car fluids and batteries from entering lakes and streams by disposing at a household hazardous waste center. Try using environmentally-safe alternatives or recipes with non-hazardous ingredients.
- Use a broom rather than a hose to clean up grass clippings and dirt.
- Keep a trash bag in your car... and use it!

(Source: Tetra Tech/MDEQ Stormwater Savvy Program)

**The KCRC participates in Storm Water Pollution Prevention Initiatives
in partnership with the Kalamazoo County Drain Commissioner and Kalamazoo County.**

2014 Road Tour

Friday, October, 24 2014, the KCRC hosted a Road Tour with local officials, contractors and citizens. The road tour showcased a “mix of fixes” used throughout Kalamazoo County in 2014 construction projects. These fixes included, crack fill, chip seal, hot mix asphalt (HMA) wedging, HMA paving along with rehabilitation projects. The route consisted of over 90 miles of roads throughout Kalamazoo County. The tour specifically highlighted 13 of KCRC’s “mix of fixes”, with stops at Hart Drive, Alamo Township and the East Michigan Avenue Bridge, Comstock Township. The projects highlighted on the tour exceeded \$6 million dollars. While this tour demonstrated a good selection of projects by the KCRC only 13 of the 134 projects completed this construction season were visited. In 2014 KCRC chip sealed 49.38 miles of local roads and 25.27 miles of primary roads, in addition to paving 11.43 miles of local roads and 13.99 miles of primary roads. “We are proud of the projects we were able to complete this construction season, especially coming out of a long winter”, Managing Director Johnson shared. “However, the rest of the story is the unmet needs of our remaining infrastructure we were not able to improve.” Michigan’s local roads and bridges are deteriorating at an alarming rate – especially after such a hard winter. Poor roads impact every resident of our county and our state. KCRC’s purchasing power has steadily eroded over the years as the gas tax, last increased in 1997, has not kept pace with inflation. The needs of those who depend on our transportation system continue to grow.

Staff Highlights

We welcome **Brian Chapman, Shelby Harris, Tate Russel and Sean Powers** to our field operations team!

We thank Commissioner **Jeffrie Maddox** for his years as a **Kalamazoo County Road Commissioner** and wish him **the best in future endeavors.**

Visit our Website

- **Board Meeting Information**
- **2013 Annual Report**
- **Construction Guidelines**
- **2015 Budget**
- **2015 – 2019 Primary Road Capital Improvement Plan**
- **Brochures**
- **Permit Applications**
- **Maps – *view our new interactive map***
- **Purchasing**
- **Road Data**

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www.kalamazooountyroads.com or email us at info@krcr-roads.com

Road Commissioners of Kalamazoo County

To better serve our County and local officials, each Road Commissioner has also been assigned as a liaison to various townships we serve as follows:

Daniel J. Moyle – 2014 Chairman;

Alamo, Oshtemo, Richland

Kenneth R. Oscarson– 2014 Vice Chairman;

Brady, Prairie Ronde, Wakeshma

Dennis J. Berkebile – Charleston, Schoolcraft, Texas

Jeffrie M. Maddox – Comstock, Cooper, Ross

David Q. Worthams – Kalamazoo, Climax, Pavilion

Educational Opportunities

- **Asset Management for Local Officials**
 - **To be rescheduled.**

The goal of the Board of County Road Commissioners of Kalamazoo County is using our expertise, energy and funds to provide the safest and most convenient road system possible, and to contribute to economic development and high quality of life throughout the county.

We are committed to providing a safe and convenient road system for our county motorists. As our customers and as residents of Kalamazoo County you are also entitled to excellent service from us at all times.

We aim to provide answers to your service requests. We encourage our residents and the motoring public to report road conditions that need attention. To make sure our service to you is prompt and courteous we strive to continually improve our methods of contact.

Office hours 7:30am – 4pm, Monday through Friday
269-381-3171 or

Call 911 for road related emergencies.

