



Road Commission
of Kalamazoo County

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New Technology on the Road for RCKC

KALAMAZOO, MI – The Road Maintenance Operators at the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County (RCKC) will have a new tool to help keep the roads safe this winter – an iPad. The RCKC has officially launched a pilot program that’s turned nearly 90 snow routes into a turn-by-turn navigated map. This is not the same Global Positioning Systems (GPS) system which we have had for years to monitor our winter maintenance operations through a storm. The new program uses both Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and (GPS) programs to have maps and routes curated specifically for the RCKC.

The RCKC worked with Wightman, a full-service consulting agency, to develop the new program starting back in December of 2019. This new tool will improve efficiencies for training new Road Maintenance Operators or for our team not familiar with a different winter maintenance area. “I think the most challenging part of the process was the sheer volume of snowplow routes to convert from old paper maps to a digital form,” notes Ryan Miller, GIS Manager with Wightman’s Kalamazoo office. With 104 mapped routes it equals out to be approximately 3041.5 miles – the same as driving from Kalamazoo to Salt Lake City, UT and back. Some other interesting statistics from the snow routes are the number of turns involved. Across all of the routes there are 3,624 right turns, 661 left turns, and 1,648 U-turns programmed.

Road Maintenance Operators were training on the new iPad tool and program during the annual winter maintenance training in November. The 2020-2021 winter season will be the first time deploying the technology in real-time. The RCKC appears to be the first across Michigan to be integrating technology in this way for winter maintenance operations.

The RCKC has served as the local road professionals of Kalamazoo County since 1909. RCKC remains committed to our goal of 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.

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