

Transportation Related Bills

Governor Snyder recently signed transportation related bills into law. When the legislature adjourned for summer recess in mid June several pieces of legislation that passed the legislature were presented to the Governor and subsequently signed into law as follows:

SB 351 Transfers a portion of the State sales tax on motor fuel to the State Trunkline Fund to match federal aid highway funds in Fiscal Year 2012 – 2013 was signed into law as **PA 225 of 2012**.

HB 4025 Transfers a portion of the state sales tax on motor fuel to the State Trunkline Fund in Fiscal Year 2012-2013 was signed into law as **PA 226 of 2012**.

SB 1146 to allow the use of historic vehicles during the month of August to be designated as an exhibition was signed into law as **PA 239 of 2012**.

HB 5424 allows a 10% axle weight exemption for vehicles hauling “farm products” as defined by the Michigan Right to Farm Act was signed into law as **PA 252 of 2012**.

HB 4146 prohibits the operation of commercial snow removal equipment without a flashing or oscillating light, and designates a violation a misdemeanor was signed into law as **PA 262 of 2012**.

For a complete summary of each law please visit:
www.legislature.mi.gov

Managing Director's Message

We are proud to report our many projects for this 2012 construction season. As a result of our Board's leadership and continued dedication we continue to put as many of our gas tax dollars out on our roadways, even at a time of decreasing revenues and increasing expenses. The 2012 construction season has over \$19 million dollars of projects as investments in our infrastructure including the local road, primary road and non-motorized system. The primary source of revenue to county road agencies comes from the Michigan Transportation Fund (MTF). MTF includes state fuel taxes, vehicle registration fees and other transportation related fees. The largest source of income to the MTF has been the state gasoline tax. A combination of more fuel efficient vehicles, motorists changing driving habits and purchasing less fuel has made funding our infrastructure needs a challenge.

The road commission prioritizes projects annually for improvements to best serve the public including road and bridge maintenance and construction work. The goal is to maintain our assets in good condition, making periodic investments, rather than letting them deteriorate to a level that requires a major investment to bring them back to a good condition. Periodic maintenance investments typically cost less than the major investment required to rebuild a road or bridge.

We are also proud to report the investment of our Kalamazoo County Townships, as our continued local road partners this construction season. As a result of these partnerships and through their continued dedication to asset management, we are happy to report approximately \$4 million of our total projects into the local road system at a time of competing priorities, decreasing revenues and increasing expenses. KCRC provides funds for preventative maintenance and construction for the local road system, which a township must provide matching funds on a dollar for dollar basis.

These 2012 construction season projects are in addition to KCRC's routine maintenance operations.

Please view our weekly press release and/or subscribe to KCRC's news feed for updates at www.kalamazoocountyroads.com.

Sincerely,

Joanna I. Johnson, Managing Director

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Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century

After nine extensions and two years of political banter, Congress has passed a reauthorization of the federal highway bill. The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) was replaced by the Moving Ahead of Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) on July 1, 2012.

MAP-21 will fund the federal-aid highway program through Sept. 30, 2014 at current funding levels with a small inflationary adjustment. The \$120 billion transportation proposal did not include the controversial Keystone XL pipeline and coal ash language that some had tried to tie to the bill.

While the conference report consolidated by two-thirds the number of program in the federal-aid highway program to focus priorities on key national goals, the 15% set aside for the Off-System Bridge Program was continued. This was a major success for county road agencies.

Similar to the debate in Michigan on best practices, components were built into the new highway bill to enhance efficiency and accountability in the project delivery process. According to the report of the Conference Committee, "The nation's surface transportation programs have not provided sufficient accountability for how tax dollars are being spent on transportation projects and would benefit from a greater focus on key national priorities. The conference report focuses the highway program on outcomes, such as reducing fatalities, improving road and bridge conditions, reducing congestion, increasing system reliability, and improving freight movement and economic vitality."

While the goals of the Conference Committee seem consistent with the dashboard models supported by Governor Snyder and the Michigan Department of Transportation, the administrative rule making process will provide the answers to how many real changes this will bring to the process for using federal-aid funding.

The authority to collect current motor fuel taxes were extended through Sept. 30, 2016, and the heavy vehicle use tax, through Sept. 30, 2017. As we have seen in recent years, motor fuel tax collections are on the decline as more fuel-efficient vehicle models are produced, and this trend will continue.

While the reauthorization allows states to continue to advance projects, the fact that no new revenues are included simply extends the status quo. With just two years before this new reauthorization expires, and given the length of time it took lawmakers to find consensus on this proposal, this debate must be a priority for congress at the beginning of the 2013-2014 legislative session.

Just like Michigan, we need to get serious about addressing both the short and long-term financial needs of our transportation infrastructure; Congress needs to prioritize the funding of our nation's road and bridge network. Much of our nation's infrastructure was built during the Eisenhower Administration and is in need of reconstruction. We cannot continue to kick this can to the next generation.

Courtesy of the County Road Association of MI



All about safety: Temporary Campaign Signs must be placed properly in the Right-of-Way

KCRC:

The placement of temporary wire campaign signs within the right-of-way (county road right-of-way is typically 33 feet from the centerline) must not obstruct vision, especially at intersections. The placement of a large temporary sign supported more permanently in the ground is not allowed. Campaign signs that do not meet these criteria will be removed. Candidates are responsible for obtaining approval from adjacent property owners before placing signs. If the placement of a temporary sign is in the right-of-way and the property owner does not prefer that the sign be placed there, they should be immediately removed. Signs must be removed after the election.

Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT):

Signs must be placed more than 30 feet from the edge of the roadway (or from the white line along the edge on highways) without barrier-type curbs. On highways that do have barrier curbs, the signs must be more than 3 feet from the back of the curb. Signs are not allowed within clear vision areas at intersections or commercial driveways, or within limited access rights of way. Campaign signs that do not meet these criteria will be removed. Candidates are responsible for obtaining approval from adjacent property owners before placing signs. Signs must be removed within 10 days after the election.

For more information on campaign sign placement standards, visit the MDOT Web site at www.michigan.gov/mdot/0,1607,7-151-42456-147773--F,00.html. *Courtesy of MDOT Press Release*



Less Lawns = Healthier Lakes

As part of our storm water management education we wanted to share the following information.

One simple and effective way to help improve the health of your lake is to just *quit mowing so much*. That sounds easy, doesn't it? The US EPA's recently-released National Lakes Assessment findings showed that of the lake stressors examined in this multi-year study, poor lakeshore habitat is the factor most impacting the biological health of the nation's lakes. Those lakes with poor lakeshore habitat are 3 times more likely to have poor biological health than those with natural lakeshore conditions (http://www.epa.gov/owow/LAKES/lakesurvey/pdf/nla_report_low_res.pdf).

All that lawn comes at a cost—to both you and the lake.

Unlike closely-mown turf grass, natural vegetation at the shoreline slows runoff during storm events. This allows water to infiltrate and sediment particles to settle out prior to reaching the lake. Native vegetation can also minimize pollutant additions to the lake. Deep-rooted shoreline vegetation minimizes erosion at the water's edge by protecting it from wave action. Taller vegetation discourages nuisance geese and waterfowl from messing up your lawn. This revegetation also provides habitat for more desirable shoreline animals—like birds, insects, reptiles and amphibians. Plus, you'll spend less time mowing, more time enjoying the lake—and less money on gas!

But I like my lawn!

It's okay to start slowly. You can still have a lawn and access to the water while providing a buffer of vegetation to protect your lake. Take a look at your lakeshore and ask yourself: can I experiment with just a portion of my lawn—like five feet, 10 feet, 30 feet? Just remember, a little bit of native shoreline is still better than all lawn. And if everyone did a little, your lake would benefit.

How do I get started?

You can start by simply not mowing a portion of the lakeshore. The seed bank in the shoreline soils likely contains native plants that will re-establish when left alone. There are also easy ways to add some attractive native plants that are commercially available from native plant growers. Think of it as you would any other landscaping project—just using native Michigan plants adapted to the lakeshore conditions. A beautiful lakeshore and a healthier lake—what could be better?

Staff Highlights

Tracy Stull, Finance Director joins the KCRC team. Tracy comes to KCRC from the City of Allegan where she also served as the Finance Director. Welcome Tracy.



Citizens can call our office directly for routine service requests and/or your primary contact for service related issues by township is as follows:

- **Jim Beaudoin**, Area Superintendent
 - Alamo, Oshtemo, Prairie Ronde, Schoolcraft, Texas
- **Bill DeYoung**, Area Superintendent
 - Charleston, Comstock, Cooper, Richland, Ross
- **Jeff Daughtry**, Area Superintendent
 - Brady, Climax, Pavilion, Kalamazoo, Wakeshma



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 info@krcr-roads.com

Call 911 for emergencies.

Board of County 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:

- Kent L. McCauley** –2012 Chairman;
Brady, Climax, Pavilion
- Daniel J. Moyle** – 2012 Vice Chairman;
Alamo, Oshtemo, Richland
- Kenneth R. Oscarson** – Kalamazoo,
Prairie Ronde, Wakeshma
- Jeffrie M. Maddox** –Comstock, Cooper, Ross
- Dennis J. Berkebile** – Charleston, Schoolcraft, Texas

Educational Opportunities

Full Depth Reclamation Field
Workshop held May 16, 2012

Traffic Safety for Elected Officials
held April 24, 2012

**Look for more educational
opportunities in the future!**

Visit our Website

- Board Meeting Information
- 2012 Budget
- 2012 – 2016 Primary Road Capital Improvement Plan
- 2012 Chip Seal Route
- 2012 Local and Primary Road Project Listing
- 2011 Annual Report
- Road Data
- Brochures
- Permits
- Maps
- Purchasing

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