

Press Release

3801 E. Kilgore Road • Kalamazoo, Michigan 49001
Phone: (269) 381-3171 • Fax: (269) 381-1760
www.kalamazoocountyroads.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 8, 2016

Contact: Joanna Johnson,
Managing Director

Rough Roads Ahead



The Road Commission of Kalamazoo County (RCKC) would like to warn motorists that gravel roads are likely to become increasingly difficult to travel and of increasing potholes on paved roads. Frequent temperature fluctuations combined with the erratic rain and/or snow, while at the same time the ground is thawing results in very unstable roadways.

GRAVEL ROADS

Because the ground is still partially frozen, when the temperatures rise quickly there is nowhere for rain water or snow melt to go. Therefore, the gravel roads turn to mud and there is little RCKC can do to stop them. Throughout this freeze/thaw period, the temperatures may fluctuate rapidly changing the soup-like muddy conditions into serious ruts when it freezes, resulting in a very bumpy ride.

“RCKC graders are out on the gravel roads when conditions allow, but they are only able to perform minor improvements until the frost has diminished and the road bed has stabilized,” said Managing Director Johnson. Putting new gravel down on the worst areas remains the only option; however this is a very labor-intensive, time-consuming and costly process for temporary relief.

That means many gravel roads throughout the County could remain rough until the weather improves enough to allow RCKC to regularly grade the roads. It is not clear when this is likely to happen.

PAVED ROADS

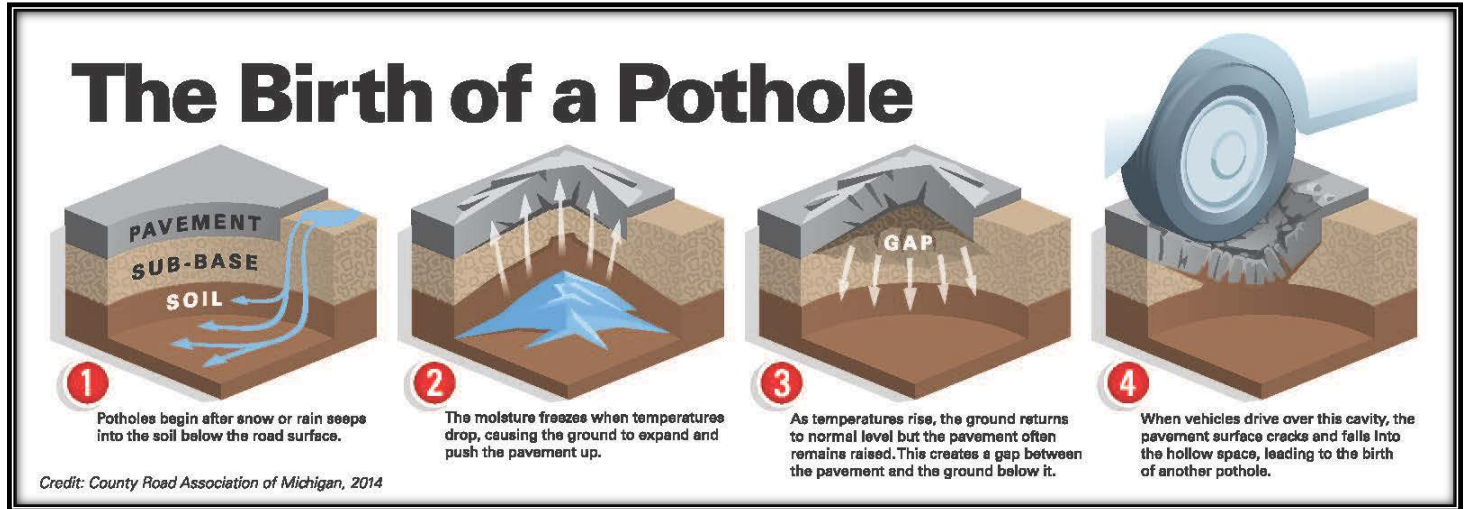
Potholes form from similar conditions. Recent weather has been ideal for the formation of potholes, with fluctuating temperatures. Potholes form when water seeps into cracks and voids on paved roads during freeze/thaw cycles. Water becomes trapped in the voids of the road surface and then freezing conditions occur

causing the water to expand and become ice. The expansion of the ice formation within and under the asphalt forces the road surface to fracture and heave. The temperature then rises melting the ice and leaving unbonded asphalt pieces in the road that will eventually work loose and are forced to the shoulder with continued vehicular traffic.

Avoiding hitting potholes is best, and driving with extra caution and not tailgating will help drivers see and react to potholes. Potholes are sometimes difficult to spot in the daytime, and even more so at night. Puddles can also conceal potholes, either already formed or beginning to form.

A properly maintained vehicle and tires can help motorists avoid potholes or minimize damage when one is struck. It is also best to slow down then release the brakes before hitting a pothole. This helps to reduce the speed at impact as well as give a vehicle's suspension the full range of travel to absorb the impact.

Motorists can report potholes/service requests by calling RCKC at (269) 381-3171 or by visiting the RCKC website at <http://www.kalamazooocountyroads.com/contact.php>.



Seasonal weight restrictions were placed in effect on February 19, 2016 for all non-all-season Kalamazoo County roads. The restrictions limit the weight and speed trucks can haul on the roadway and are intended to minimize damage to the Kalamazoo County roads while the ground continues to thaw.

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