

## THE MILLER MESSAGE

DECEMBER 19, 2008

## FROM THE MANAGER'S DESK

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## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **What Happens at Signalized Intersections When the Power is Out?**
- **GPS—AVL Update**
- **SCRC Has A New Website!**
- **Ten Things You Don't Know About Transportation Funding.**

Many of you already know from attending the October 29<sup>th</sup> meeting that there have been many changes at the Saginaw County Road Commission throughout 2008. Some of the more significant changes include the installation of an Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) system, implementation of a new internal communication system, and staffing changes in virtually all departments.

Why all of the changes you ask? All of you know the current economic challenges we face on a day to day basis in our personal lives. Well, business is no different...skyrocketing costs in asphalt, steel pipe, fuel and healthcare as leading examples have driven construction costs to a point where they simply can't be afforded. Compound that with revenues that are now lower than they were in 1998, and you're forced to look at not

only your operation today, but how you will do business into the future.

What does this mean to us at the Road Commission? In short, it means that we will be doing less construction in the near future, and more maintenance. In an effort to ride out this economic storm we are in, emphasis will be put on maintaining the current condition of our system until the funding mechanism in Lansing is changed to meet rising costs and our ever increasing needs.

Over the last several months, we have seen our administrative staff reduced by 28% creating an annual savings of just over \$1.4 million. When all is said and done, this turned into an annual increase to the maintenance budget of \$876,000 and eventually the hiring

of 6 additional people, both enabling us to provide increased maintenance at no additional expense. In addition, two other key changes were the AVL system and the communication system. These two tools will assist our smaller administrative staff in managing our equipment, manpower and materials, thus providing a more effective and efficient maintenance operation.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for your patience and support through this process.

Wishing you and your family a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.



*Brian*

## Looking Back on the SCRC 2008 Construction Season

Now that winter is upon us, we can look back at another summer full of successful road and bridge projects throughout Saginaw County. The summer of 2008 was an exceptionally busy year for Federal Aid projects in particular because of the "Jobs Today" program that was released in 2006 to promote Federal Aid Projects.

Federal Aid "Jobs Today" Road Projects:

Under the Jobs Today program, the State of Michigan provided a 20% grant to local agencies on Federal Aid projects which covered the costs typically paid by the road commission. The other 80% of the cost for these types of projects is typically paid for using State and/or Federal Funding. Over the last 2 years, the road commission has taken advantage of five different projects through the Jobs Today program.

This summer (2008), our office completed Jobs Today road projects along three different routes including: Gary Road (Lincoln to Sheridan), Chapin Road (South County Line to M-57), and Beyer Road (Burt to Willard).

Federal Aid Safety Projects:

Two safety projects were also completed earlier this summer to help reduce accidents in high profile areas. Safety Projects are generally funded with 80% federal funds and 20% Road Commission funds.

One of the safety projects was near Heritage High School along the portion of Center Road between Shattuck and Maybrook. This project involved widening Center Road to accommodate a designated left turn lane to help accommodate school rush hour traffic and reduce rear end collisions. A new traffic signal at the school entrance was also part of the project to help optimize traffic flow into and out of the school.

The other safety related project constructed this summer was at the intersection of Barnard Road and McCarty Road. This project also involved roadway widening and the installation of a new traffic signal. All four quadrants were widened to accommodate a designated left turn lane and the necessary tapers to once again reduce the amount of rear end collisions. The new traffic signal includes larger, more visible lenses with energy efficient LED lights.

Federal Aid Bridge Projects:

Two major bridge projects were also tackled this summer, and funded through the Local Bridge Program (80% Federal, 15% State, 5% Road Commission). These projects included the Brant Road Bridge over the South Branch of the Bad River and the Fordney Road Bridge over the Whitmore Drain. Both of

these bridges had been long awaited projects because of their deficiencies and limited weight carrying capabilities. Both bridges have now been opened back up to full legal loads allowing free movement of vehicles of all sizes.

Local and Primary Road Projects (Non Federal Aid):

Many other projects were also completed throughout Saginaw County during the summer of 2008. Some of the projects were constructed internally by Saginaw County Road Commission crews, others were constructed by outside contractors. Listed below are many of the projects that were successfully completed. Those marked with an asterisk (\*) were constructed either in whole or part by Saginaw County Road Commission crews:

Chesaning Road over the Birdsall Drain – New Culvert\*

Hemlock Road over the Jennings Drain – New Culvert\*

Hemlock Road over the Eaton Drain – New Culvert\*

Bishop Road over Miller Drain – Bridge Repairs\*

## Power's Out! What Happens at Signalized Intersections?

Adapted from Michigan State Police Traffic Services Section, Field Update #32.

A number of factors must be taken into account when determining the appropriate course of action in response to the loss of power at a signalized intersection. MDOT has issued a memorandum for response to power outages involving traffic signals on state trunkline highways, which accounts for a variety of factors that can influence if, when, and how temporary traffic control devices may be posted. While the memorandum is not binding on county road commissions or municipal road authorities, many have adopted a similar position.

According to Michigan State Police (MSP) Traffic Services Section, when a signal loses power, the intersection becomes uncontrolled and reverts back to the basic right-of-way requirements found in MCL 257.649 (1) and (2). It does not become a four-way stop, as is frequently reported in the media.

MCL 257.649 (1) and (2) reads:

(1) The driver of a vehicle approaching an

intersection shall yield the right of way to a vehicle which has entered the intersection from a different highway.

- (2) When two vehicles enter an intersection from different highways at approximately the same time, the driver of the vehicle on the left shall yield the right of way to the vehicle on the right.

MSP has adopted Official order 49, Enclosure (9), to provide guidance to department members when responding to the loss of power at an intersection.

### On the Web:

*MSP Traffic Services Field Update Archive*

*MDOT Office Memo—Dark Signals*

*Section 257.649 of Michigan Vehicle Code*

For direct links to these resources and more, go to:

[www.MichiganLTAP.org/Bridge](http://www.MichiganLTAP.org/Bridge)

Article from LTAP's "The Bridge"—Vol. 2, No. 2

## Bishop Road Bridge

In mid-October, it became necessary to temporarily close the Bishop Road Bridge over the Miller Drain for emergency repairs. The Albee Township bridge has been plagued with problems over the years because of its deteriorated deck. Prior to its closure, Road Commission crews had been able to keep the structure open by making isolated, temporary repairs. A recent bridge inspection identified that a more substantial fix was necessary.

Road Commission crews from District 3 mobilized to the site and made several repairs so that the structure could be reopened in early November. Repairs included the installation of a new galvanized deck, new signage and delineators reflecting the reduced width (one lane), and stop signs on both bridge approaches to maintain slow, single file traffic. The overall cost of the recent repairs amounted to approximately \$30,000.

The importance of the Bishop Road Bridge to the local community is most apparent during the spring planting season and the fall harvest season. Although the reduced width of the repaired bridge is not ideal, it was the only way the bridge could be reopened for use by the local community to avoid the 14 mile detour.

The Michigan Department of Transportation recently selected the Bishop Road Bridge over the Miller Drain for replacement in 2012. At that time, the \$1,000,000 bridge will be constructed with 80% Federal Funds, 15% State Funds, and 5% Saginaw County Road Commission Funds.

Until that time, it will still be necessary to closely monitor the existing structure to make sure that the temporary repairs recently made will continue to hold up over the next 3 to 4 years.

Article Provided by Adam Ball

## TECHNICAL CORNER

### New SCRC Website Article Provided by Tom Luck

We set out with several goals in mind when making the new site.

One, make it easier to find information. Easy to use navigation menus clearly label the different types of information available. Web pages have been redesigned with the latest web technologies that make locating information much quicker.

Two, share more information with the public in regards to what we do and how we do it. We have added the ability to download board minutes, annual reports, and bids. A current news section was added on the homepage to list current happenings at the Road Commission. A new notification service section allows anyone with an email address to sign up for

instant email notifications related to employment, road projects, weight restrictions, bids, and headlines.

Three, use the site to create a more efficient organization. The public can now contact individual employees through our staff directory page. The goal is to more efficiently route requests to the employee that can best address the issue. Placing bids online for download will reduce the costs of printing, postage, and advertising. Answers to the most commonly asked questions can now be found on our newly updated and organized FAQ page.

To check out the rest of the improvements made, visit [www.scrc-mi.org](http://www.scrc-mi.org).

### GPS - AVL Update Article Provided by Tom Luck

Our AVL implementation is going full steam ahead. To date we have installed 35 trucks with GPS equipment and blade/spreader sensors. The early snow fall this year has already put the new system to the test. Other than minor sensor adjustments, the system is performing very well. The installation of wireless internet and GPS in the Director of Maintenance, Maintenance Super-

intendent, and District Foreman's vehicles is almost complete. They will have full access to the AVL system in the field and be better suited to address issues with the information readily available. Future plans include finalizing installations and putting the live AVL data on our website. Thanks to everyone who has helped make this a success.

## Safety Corner

The holiday season is approaching and with it comes time for family, friends, travel, food and parties. It's easy to get caught up in the excitement of the holidays and overlook the potential hazards. But no matter how you choose to celebrate, you can't forget about safety. Incorporate safety into all your activities, not just what you do at work.

Never drink and drive. If you're attending a holiday celebration where you know you will drink alcohol, make sure you have a designated driver. If you are throwing a party, be a responsible host and provide non-alcoholic beverages for designated drivers. Don't allow your guests to drive home if they've been drinking. Whenever you drive, wear your seatbelt and make sure all your passengers wear their seatbelts also.

Candles are often part of the holiday celebrations and decorations. Never leave candles burning when you are away from home. Place candles out of reach of children and pets. As you decorate, don't overload electrical circuits; remember that's the circuit, not just the outlet. Never burn decorations or Christmas trees in the fireplace. Keep your family and guests safe with working smoke detectors on every level of your home.

The holidays can also be a very stressful time of the year. Reduce your stress level by allowing enough time for shopping and travelling. Remember that stores, airports and highways will be crowded with holiday shoppers and traffic. Don't try to do everything yourself, share the load with family and friends and take a little time for yourself to relax.

Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from your safety committee.

Article Provided by Randy Emeott

## UPCOMING MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

**\*\*Estimated Dates\*\***

Information Provided By Scott Hare

JANUARY 2009

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Snow & Ice Ditching -	Removal Weather	Permitting		1 Holiday Office Closed	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19 Holiday Office Closed	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

FEBRUARY 2009

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

MARCH 2009

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 Advertise Emulsions & Cold Patch Bids	2	3	4	5	6	7
8 Advertise Emulsions & Cold Patch Bids	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18 Tentative Emulsions & Cold Patch Bid Opening	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

### Looking Back on the SCRC 2008 Construction Season

Continued from page 1

Tittabawassee Road (Bay to Michigan) - Concrete Repairs

Lakefield Road (Hemlock to Fordney) - Drainage and Paving

Swan Creek at Hemlock - Overhead Flashing Beacons\*

Swan Creek at Merrill - Overhead Flashing Beacons\*

Hanchett Street - Shattuck to Rustic\*

Thomas Road - Schomaker to Gratiot

Townline Road - Bell to Pettit

Berberovich Subdivision - Resurfacing

Roedel Road (Dehmel to Block) - Drainage and Paving\*

Diamondale Subdivision - Resurfacing

Fenmore Road (Nelson to Lakefield) - Paving

Pacelli Street - Resurfacing

Hepburn Place - Resurfacing

Davis Road (SVSU to Freeland Road) - Drainage and Paving

Prior Road (M-52 to the West) - Drainage and Paving\*

Verne Road (Sheridan to Dorwood) - Drainage and Chip Seal

For those projects constructed by internal road commission crews, many thanks for your hard work and craftsmanship in making the projects a reality. We are fortunate to have talented crews on staff to help construct roads and respond to major repairs.

For those projects constructed by external contractors, a big thank you to the construction management team for facilitating the process. Your hard work over the summer months does not go unnoticed.

Article Provided by Adam Ball

## Welcome New SCRC Employees

Restructuring of the Road Commission has allowed for the hiring of six new employees to help provide service to the 27 townships that we serve. Scott Gunther has joined the Hemlock Garage staff as their mechanic. Donald Holland, Jr. is the new assistant mechanic in the Saginaw Garage. The Road Commission is also in the process of hiring 4 new truck drivers. These additional four positions will add one driver to the Chesaning Garage, one driver at our Hemlock Garage and two drivers to work out of the Saginaw Garage in the Fixed Maintenance Department.

We look forward to having the extra help to provide service to Saginaw County. Please take the time to give a warm welcome to our new employees.



Scott Gunther



Donald Holland

## Larry Monroe Retires After 36 Years

Larry Monroe began his career at the Saginaw County Road Commission on April 27, 1972. Thirty-six years later, he is hanging up his Forman's hat. Larry hired into the Road Commission as a truck driver. Throughout the years, and with lots of hard work, Larry worked his way up the ladder to become our District 2 Foreman. Larry oversees a crew of 8 employees that are responsible for maintaining the following Townships: Birch Run, Blumfield, Bridgeport, Buena Vista, Frankenmuth, Spaulding & Taymouth.

Throughout his tenure, Larry has touched many lives within the Road Commission and Saginaw County. His playful personality and contagious smile will definitely be missed.

Larry, we wish you the best of luck on your retirement and hope you have a lifetime full of happiness.



## New Data Shows Americans Drove 15 Billion Fewer Miles Than Last Year

New federal data shows Americans are continuing a 10-month-long decline in driving habits, U.S. Secretary of Transportation Mary Peters announced. "The decline is putting new pressure on the way road, bridge and transit projects are funded at a time of record growth in transit ridership, showing the need for a new approach for funding transportation construction," she added.

"We pay for transit the same way we pay for road and bridge projects—with federal gas taxes," said Secretary Peters, who made the announcement during a visit to a light rail station under construction in Dallas. "Relying on the gas tax is like relying on cardboard to keep the rain out—the longer you use it the less it works."

"In August 2008, Americans drove 15 billion fewer miles, or 5.6% less, than they did in August 2007—the largest ever year-to-year decline recorded in a single month," Secretary Peters said. She added that "over the past 10 months, Americans have driven 78 billion fewer miles than they did in the same 10 months the previous year. Transit ridership, meanwhile, saw an increase of 6.2 percent this summer compared to last."

Article From CRAM News—Volume 197

We're On The Web!

www.scrc-mi.org

## SAGINAW COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION

3020 Sheridan Avenue  
Saginaw, MI 48601

Phone: 989-752-6140

Fax: 989-752-8934

**REGULAR OFFICE HOURS:** Monday–Friday

7:00 A.M.—3:30 P.M.

**SUMMER OFFICE HOURS:** May 1st — Labor Day

Monday–Thursday 6:00 A.M.—4:00 P.M.

CLOSED FRIDAY

### COMMISSIONERS

Wallace “Butch” Warner—Chairperson

John Sangster—Vice-Chairperson

Richard Mallette—Member



## 10 Things You Don't Know About Transportation Funding

1. Higher gas prices don't mean more funding for transportation.
2. The gas tax is a flat 19 cents per gallon, regardless of the price of fuel.
3. Only a small fraction of Michigan's 6% sales tax added to gas goes to fund transportation.
4. Every dollar of federal gas tax collected in Michigan is distributed nationwide, with only 92 cents from each dollar coming back to fund Michigan roads.
5. Fuel taxes and registration fees cost the average Michigan motorist \$35 a month.
6. For every dollar spent on transportation, \$5 to \$6 in economic benefit is created.
7. Michigan has ranked in the bottom 10 in the nation in transportation funding for the past 40 years.
8. Lost time, wasted fuel, crashes, and vehicle repairs cost the average Michigan motorist \$1,671 annually. This cost will increase if funding restrictions cause roads to deteriorate.
9. Construction costs have increased by 20% to 32% in the past five years.
10. What you don't know will cost you!

Information Provided by Michigan Department of Transportation

***Saginaw County Road Commission has 1,846 miles of roads to maintain. Although local townships share in the cost of maintaining some of the roads, the Saginaw County Road Commission is responsible for most of the cost.***

***The extensive number of rivers and drains in Saginaw County means there are also over 200 bridges to maintain. Smaller tributaries and ditches add more than 2,800 culverts to the road system and the list continues to grow as new roads are built to meet the needs of our ever changing and expanding community.***

***As you can see, maintaining the county road system is no easy task; however, everyone at the Saginaw County Road Commission is committed to giving you the best road system for your money. We are proud to be a part of the Saginaw Community and are committed to building a quality road system which will last for many generations to come.***

## HEALTH CORNER- PREVENT THE SPREAD OF GERMS

Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches their eyes, nose or mouth.

Germs can live for a long time. Some can live for two hours or more on surfaces such as: door handles, steering wheels, equipment controls and dashboards.

Avoid spreading germs and reduce the risk of infection:

- Clean your hands often.
- Avoid touching your nose, mouth and eyes.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, or your upper sleeve if tissues are not available. (Wash hands or use a hand sanitizer after a cough, sneeze or after you blow your nose).
- Avoid close contact with co-workers. Avoid shaking hands and always wash hands after contact with others.
- Use “no-touch” trash cans.
- Keep work surfaces, telephones, computer equipment and other frequently touched surfaces and office equipment clean. Be sure that any cleaner used is safe. Use only disinfectants registered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and follow all directions and safety precautions indicated on the label.

Good work practices for driving a shared vehicle:

- Wipe down contact surfaces with disinfecting wipes and let dry. This includes: door handles, window controls, seatbelt components, steering wheel, dash, gear shift, radios, equipment controls, etc.
- Wash/sanitize hands thoroughly at every stop.

**Remember: Every Drive. Every Shift. Every Stop.**