

THE MILE MARKER

MARCH 27, 2009

FROM THE MANAGER'S DESK

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SPECIAL POINTS
OF INTEREST:

- **AVL-GPS System Launched on SCRC Website**
- **Jan Thom Retires After 33 Years of Service**
- **Welcome New Employees**
- **SCRC Participates in 2009 Home Builders Show**
- **Summer Work Schedule Begins April 27th.**

You've probably already noticed, but the title of this publication has changed. Not to take away from its intent, or content, but to bring us closer to today's time and into the future.

Many of you probably recall that the previous name "The Miller Message" was in tribute to the late Bill Miller, our previous manager. The goal that Bill had in mind was to provide a publication that informed the elected officials of the county, our employees, and our retirees as to what is currently happening within the Road Commission and throughout our 1800 plus miles of road. Unfortunately, Bill passed away a little over a year ago, just one week prior to the re-

lease of the first edition, thus staff felt it appropriate to name it "The Miller Message".

To date I feel the staff has made good on their commitment in keeping Bill's goal alive and informative, however, the time has come to move forward. In an effort to create a new name, a request for suggestions was put out to our current staff. Although many wonderful ideas were presented, the title "The Mile Marker" seemed to stand out for most. I would like to personally thank all those who took the time to submit a suggestion.

While writing this, I happened to notice a similarity in the titles that makes "The Mile Marker" even more fitting. If you take both titles and simply look at the initials (TMM), they are the same.

Although the title has changed, the intent, and content remains the same. And for me, whenever I read the words "The Mile Marker" I will always remember my friend Bill Miller and his newsletter "The Miller Message".

Brian



POTENTIAL BRIDGE PROJECT DELAYS

Mid-way through 2008, it appeared as though the Saginaw County Road Commission was going to be able to reconstruct two of its largest and most problematic bridges during the 2009 construction season. Since that time, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) has provided preliminary indications that one, if not both of the projects may be postponed due to funding shortages in the MDOT Local Bridge Program.

One of the bridges in funding jeopardy is the Fort Road Bridge over the Cass River, a \$2.2 Million structure that provides a key link from downtown Bridgeport to other areas south and east of the Cass River. The existing bridge, which was built in the late 1950's has been on the watch list for several years due to the deterioration that has progressed in the beams.



The other bridge that could potentially be delayed is the Center Road Bridge over the Tittabawassee River. Reconstruction of this bridge is expected to cost approximately \$3.3 Million dollars. Replacement of the structure, originally built in 1927, will solve deficiencies that currently exist in the railing and pier columns. The Center Road Bridge is heavily used by everyday motorists and truckers attempting to avoid the congestion and signals along M-46 in the Shields area.



By mid- to late-April of 2009, the Saginaw County Road Commission will be notified by MDOT regarding the status of both projects and whether or not they will be delayed. Unless additional funding becomes available from other regions within the State of Michigan, the projects would be pushed back to the 2010 construction season, at the earliest. We eagerly await the final decision by the Michigan Department of Transportation so that we can plan accordingly.

Vital Participants in Michigan's Economy

Michigan's county road agencies are a vital partner in keeping our state and local economies running. They are the agencies responsible for keeping roads open to commerce and safe for travel, which is critical to Michigan's tourism industry. Beyond providing roads that keep our economy moving, see our children safely to school, ensure delivery of emergency services, and take us on our daily travels, road commissions employ nearly 7,000 Michigan workers and support local commerce and contractors across the state.

According to a 2008 report issued by the Governor's Transportation Funding Task Force (TF2), adequately funding transportation by doubling transportation funding would sustain 126,000 Michigan jobs and yield nearly \$15 billion in other economic benefits across all sectors of the economy. As previously noted, without increased transportation funding, Michigan will likely lose \$1 billion in federal funds by 2010, which could lead to the elimination of another 17,000 jobs.

A study conducted by the Texas Transportation Institute estimated that congestion, poor pavement condition and crashes cost Michigan drivers and truckers \$7 billion annually in wasted fuel, lost time and productivity, vehicle maintenance costs and more.

An economic analysis conducted by the University of Michigan estimates that increasing transportation funding to the level recommended by the TF2 would provide each household an additional \$2,000 per year in increased personal income and savings through reduced travel time and vehicle maintenance, and increased safety. It is clear that increasing transportation funding is the economic stimulus Michigan needs. Along with increased funding, road commissions will continue to implement reforms and efficiencies to stretch taxpayer dollars.

Article from: County Road Association of Michigan (CRAM) - Michigan's County Road Commissions—Driving Our Economy Forward

Adam Ball, Director of Engineering

PRODUCTIVE 2008 FOR FIXED MAINTENANCE

2008 was a very productive year for the fixed maintenance department. During the past year, the department has cleaned and jetted 773 catch basins. This is a 50% increase from 2007. The increase is due to the fact that the pull-behind tile jet is used when vacuuming isn't an issue, which allows the department to concentrate its efforts on maintenance. The department is on a 10-year maintenance schedule to clean catch basins which is similar to the sign shop program of updating signs on a 10-year cycle. The areas that were set as goals for 2008 were section 20-15 and section 20-14 (of the certification map) in Saginaw Township. The number of catch basins in these two sections totaled 403 basins. The other areas that were maintained, over and above set goals, included Dixie Highway (173 catch basins), Outer Drive (128 catch basins), Williamson Road (45 catch basins), and the Diamondale Road project (24 catch basins). We were called out too often for problems in these locations and after opening up basins, it was apparent that these areas needed immediate attention.

This department is proactive in achieving goals set for them and then going beyond. The fixed maintenance department has maintained 3,428 scheduled catch basins since its conception in 2003. In Saginaw Township, all catch basins have been cleaned from the southern-most part of the township to Shattuck Road.

The Road Commissions' catch basins are cleaned and jetted while the Drain Commissions' catch basins are vacuumed out, as instructed. The goal for the fixed maintenance department this year is to start in section 20-11 in Saginaw Township and work to the west. The town of Hemlock in Richland Township will also be a goal, cleaning the entire system after responding to a series of problems last year. The amount that will be completed will depend on the unexpected problems that our foremen face, however, maintenance will have a high priority, as it does every year. As of November 2008, all catch basins cleaned have been entered into the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Initiative (SWPPI) web log.

The fixed maintenance department has seen many changes in personnel in 2008. Thank you goes out to this year's members: Scott Carter, Bob Adams, John Flynn, Tim Reisterer, Jim Lehman, Jr., Vincent Donald, Ben Follett and Mark Herbers for their hard work and dedication. The fixed maintenance department also welcomes its newest members, Aric Martin and Joe St. Charles. The fixed maintenance department has also benefited from 2008 past members: Michele Knickerbocker, John Inman, Chet Allen and Ben Wenzel. It is their hard work and dedication that has helped to make this department productive and successful. Thank you to all.

Rob Hudec, Maintenance Superintendent

WINTER MAINTENANCE COSTS

What a winter this has been! Our first measurable snowfall occurred on November 16th, 2008 and continued non-stop throughout the winter, accumulating to just over 76" of snow for the season. Adding to the well-above average snowfall, many of the snow events occurred on weekends and holidays considerably increasing the overall removal costs. 2008-2009 winter maintenance costs at the time of print is \$1.8 million.

This year we put together a pilot program to test several different variations of snow removal product mixtures. The intent of the test was to provide side-by-side comparisons in using a combination of materials and application rates in identical environments to determine the melting rates and effects of each individual material. The products used for this test included rock salt, 2NS sand, and mineral well brine with 26% chloride. The results of this test will then be used to determine which combination of materials can be best utilized within certain areas of the county ultimately reducing overall costs and efforts to our winter maintenance program.

It has definitely been a trying year considering the decrease in funding and increase in pricing of materials. It has been a year of attempting to find more cost-effective ways to work without sacrificing services.

I am very proud of our employees and their performance this past winter. We worked together to attempt to reduce and contain our overall costs while still providing the level of service the residents of Saginaw County have come to expect from us.

In closing, I would like to thank each and every one of our employees for going above and beyond the call of duty in providing services across Saginaw County.

Scott Hare, Director of Maintenance

TECHNICAL CORNER

AVL—GPS UPDATE

Shortly after the implementation of our AVL system and the announcement of the information being available to the public on our website, this office fielded several calls and comments from both critics and supporters of the system. Some of the comments heard were "what a waste of money", "spend the money on the roads", "it's nice to see my tax dollars at work", and "finally, a government organization stepping up to accountability and transparency". These comments were heard from employees, public, and elected officials alike.

Regardless of any personal thoughts or positions, the implementation of this equipment, like any other purchases, was based solely on factual information. A two-year "Return on Investment" was created by gathered information during a pilot program the previous year, and information gathered through conversations with other entities across the nation using a very simple AVL program.

Technology has come a long way in recent time. If you think back, it really wasn't that long ago that we were working without computers, navigational devices in our cars, or

the simple cell phone to name a few. After the computer came the internet and email capabilities. Try to imagine your personal life much less your professional life without it. AVL (GPS to many) is simply another piece of technology that will allow us to better manage our current efforts and create easily accessible historical data that traditionally, either didn't exist, or was tucked away in a vault or basement.

Since this program kicked off, we have also received calls from many of our counterparts here in Saginaw County, Road Commissions across the entire state and departments as far away as Washington State inquiring as to the status because they were also interested in implementing a similar program. There has been a lot of time, thought and effort put into this program by many members of this organization. They should be proud of the fact that not only have they improved our efficiencies here in Saginaw, but have provided factual information and testimony that has potential to benefit the entire state.

Brian Wendling, Managing Director

SAFETY CORNER

PREVENTING BACK INJURIES

Perhaps more than any other occupation, construction work puts a hefty burden on your back. You must use your back for such tasks as lifting, bending, pushing and pulling. All of these repetitive activities increase your risk of suffering a back injury.

Back injuries and back pain can make your job difficult, unbearable, or even impossible. You must take on the responsibility of preventing back injuries because your safety and livelihood demand that you maintain a healthy back. The good news is that back injuries are preventable.

Most of the time, you hear about proper lifting techniques as the method of preventing back injuries. This practice involves letting your legs do the lifting, keeping the object close to your body and avoiding unnecessary lifting by using mechanical devices.

Poor posture places a lot of stress on your back. Slouching or rounding your shoulders can lead to muscle fatigue and injury. Get into the habit of standing and sitting in an upright position to keep your body in proper balance. If you are sitting for long periods of time, change your position often, stand up and stretch, or go for a short walk.

Aerobic exercise can strengthen and stretch muscles in your stomach and back. Walking, stationary biking, and swimming can improve blood flow to the spine and losing weight also reduces stress on your back.

Know your limits and listen to your body. If you feel back pain, stop the activity that aggravates it. Report all injuries to your supervisor right away.

Randy Emeott, Fleet & Facilities Manager

UPCOMING MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

Estimated Dates

Information Provided By Scott Hare

APRIL, 2009						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1 Hot Patch	2	3	4
5	6 Hot Patch	7	8	9	10 HOLIDAY OFFICE CLOSED	11
12	13 Hot Patch	14	15	16	17	18
19	20 Gravel	21	22	23	24	25
26	27 Gravel START 4—10's	28	29	30		

MAY, 2009						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1 OFFICE CLOSED	2
3	4 Gravel	5	6	7	8 OFFICE CLOSED	9
10	11 Gravel Brine	12	13	14	15 OFFICE CLOSED	16
17	18 Brine	19	20	21	22 OFFICE CLOSED	23
24	25 HOLIDAY OFFICE CLOSED	26	27	28	29 OFFICE CLOSED	30
31						

JUNE, 2009						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1 Chip Seal	2	3	4	5 OFFICE CLOSED	6
7	8 Chip Seal	9	10	11	12 OFFICE CLOSED	13
14	15 Chip Seal	16	17	18	19 OFFICE CLOSED	20
21	22 Chip Seal	23	24	25	26 OFFICE CLOSED	27
28	29 Chip Seal	30				

SUMMER HOURS: MONDAY—THURSDAY—6:00 A.M.—4:00 P.M.—CLOSED FRIDAY

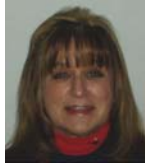
JAN THOM RETIRES AFTER 33 YEARS

Jan Thom began her career at the Saginaw County Road Commission on March 8, 1976. She started working in the Administrative Office where she processed payroll for 18 years along with performing other clerical duties. For the next two years she drove truck in District 6. In 1996, Jan joined the Sign Shop Crew where she spent 5 years replacing signs across Saginaw County. During the last eight years, she worked as the Stock Room Clerk in the Saginaw Garage.

Jan also served 14 years as the treasurer for the AFSCME Local 1987 Union and the past year and a half serving as the Saginaw Garage Steward.

During her tenure, Jan has worked in many different capacities at the Road Commission. She has touched many lives and will definitely be missed.

Congratulations Jan! We wish you the best of luck on your retirement.



Welcome New SCRC Employees

Restructuring of the Road Commission has allowed for the hiring of four new truck drivers. These additional four positions will help provide service to the 27 townships within Saginaw County.

Chris Breternitz joined the Road Commission on January 26th and is working out of the Hemlock Garage. Ed Krupp started on January 27th and is working out of the Chesaning Garage. Aric Martin joined the Road Commission on January 28th and is working out of the Saginaw Garage in the Fixed Maintenance Department. Joe St. Charles started on February 3rd, and is also working out of the Saginaw Garage in the Fixed Maintenance Department.

Please take the time to give a warm welcome to our new employees.



Chris Breternitz



Ed Krupp



Aric Martin



Joe St. Charles

2009 CONSTRUCTION SEASON

Adam Ball, Director of Engineering

Listed below are SCRC budgeted projects that are contingent on State funding and right-of-way acquisition.

Township	Road	Location	Type of Improvement	Start of Construction	End of Construction
Saginaw/James	Center Rd.	Bridge	Bridge Reconstruction	May (?)	November (?)
Thomas/Richland	Geddes Rd.	At Orr Rd.	Intersection Widening & Reconstruction	Mid-May	Late-June
Thomas	Geddes Rd.	Orr Rd. to HSC	Widening & Reconstruction	Mid-May	Late-June
Thomas	Geddes Rd.	At Graham Rd.	Intersection Widening & Reconstruction	Late-June	Late-July
Thomas	Geddes Rd.	Graham to Thomas	Reconstruction	Late-June	Late-July
Richland	Frost Rd.	At Orr Rd.	Intersection Widening & Reconstruction	Mid-July	Mid-September
Thomas	Geddes Rd.	Thomas to Miller	Reconstruction	Late-July	Late-August
Spaulding	Curtis Rd.	Over the Spaulding Drain	Joint Repair	Mid-Summer	Mid-Summer
Buena Vista	Outer Dr.	Hess to Perkins	Reconstruction	August	November
Buena Vista	Hess Rd.	Towerline to Ruff	Reconstruction	Fall (?)	Fall (?)
Thomas/Richland	Orr Rd.	At Gratiot Rd.	Intersection Reconstruction	Fall	Fall
Thomas/Richland	Orr Rd.	At HSC Driveway	Widening & Reconstruction	Fall	Fall

We're On The Web!

www.scrs-mi.org

SAGINAW COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION

3020 Sheridan Avenue
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Phone: 989-752-6140
Fax: 989-752-8934

REGULAR OFFICE HOURS: Monday–Friday

7:00 A.M.–3:30 P.M.

SUMMER OFFICE HOURS: April 27th – Labor Day

Monday–Thursday 6:00 A.M.–4:00 P.M.

CLOSED FRIDAY

COMMISSIONERS

John D. Sangster – Chairperson

Richard F. Mallette – Vice-Chairperson

Wallace “Butch” Warner – Member

MANAGING DIRECTOR

Brian J. Wendling



2009 HOME BUILDERS SHOW

The Saginaw County Road Commission participated in the 2009 Home Builders Show at Saginaw Valley State University, March 13th–15th. The Road Commission had a booth with hopes to reach contractors and property owners regarding necessary permits while also promoting our policies and procedures.

The Home Builders Show is three action-packed days of networking with local builders, contractors and the public. It provided a great environment for us to promote the necessary permits needed for new construction, working in the right-of-way of Saginaw County, oversized or overweight loads and moving during our weight restriction season. We were able to meet with the public and answer any questions they had regarding the Road Commission and the services we provide.

The event was definitely informational and proved to be beneficial to both the Road Commission and to the public.

Thank you to the employees who volunteered their weekend time to help connect with the public while projecting a positive image for the Road Commission.

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 - ASTHMA & ALLERGIES

Asthma and allergies often go hand-in-hand. Asthma is a disease of the branches of the bronchial tubes, which carry air in and out of the lungs. Air is normally taken into the body through the nose and windpipe and into the bronchial tubes. At the end of the tubes are tiny air sacs called alveoli that deliver oxygen to the blood. The air sacs also collect carbon dioxide, which is exhaled out of the body. During normal breathing, the bands of muscle surrounding the airways are relaxed and air moves freely. But during an asthma episode or “attack”, there are three main changes that stop air from moving freely into the airways:

- The bands of muscle that surround the airways tighten, causing them to narrow in what is called a “bronchospasm”.
- The lining of the airways becomes swollen, or inflamed.
- The cells that line the airways produce more mucus, which is thicker than normal.

The narrowed airway traps carbon dioxide in the lungs. As a result, people with asthma feel they cannot get enough air into the lungs. All of these changes make breathing difficult.

Some people can go a long time between asthma episodes while others have some symptoms every day. Common symptoms of asthma include frequent cough—especially at night, shortness of breath, wheezing, chest tightness, pain or pressure. Not every person with asthma has the same symptoms in the same way. You may have all of these symptoms, or you may have different symptoms at different times. Your symptoms may also vary from one episode to the next. Symptoms may be mild during one asthma episode and severe during another.

Mild asthma episodes are generally more common. Usually, the airways open up within a few minutes to a few hours. Severe episodes are less common, but last longer and require immediate medical help. It is important to recognize and treat even mild symptoms to help you prevent severe episodes and keep asthma in control.

Asthma is a problem in the airways due to multiple factors. The airways in a person with asthma are very sensitive and react to many things, which are referred to as “triggers”. Reactions are different for each person and vary from time to time. One of the most important aspects of asthma control is avoiding triggers when possible. Common asthma triggers include: infections (colds, flu, sinus infections); exercise (very common in children); weather (cold air, changes in temperatures); tobacco smoke and air pollution; allergens (including dust mites, pollens, pets, mold spores and foods); dust or items causing dust; strong odors from chemical products; strong emotions (anxiety, crying, yelling or laughing hard); medicines (including aspirin, ibuprofen and beta blocker medications used to treat conditions including high blood pressure, migraines or glaucoma).

By avoid triggers, taking medicines and carefully monitoring daily asthma symptoms, asthma attacks can be avoided or at least limited. Proper use of medicines is the basis of good asthma control. Medicines used to treat asthma include bronchodilators (rapidly open the airways), anti-inflammatories (reduce swelling and mucus production) and leukotriene modifiers (helps prevent the release of asthma-inducing chemicals from cells in the body).

It is also important to keep track of how well your lungs are functioning. Asthma symptoms are monitored using a peak flow meter—a device that measures the maximum amount of air that comes out of the lungs when you exhale forcefully. This measurement is called peak expiratory flow (PEF) and is calculated in liters per minute.

The meter can alert you to changes in the airways that may be a sign of worsening asthma before you have symptoms. By taking daily peak flow readings you can learn when to adjust your medications to keep asthma under good control. Your doctor can also use this information to adjust your treatment plan.

There is no cure for asthma, but it can be treated and controlled. In most cases, people with asthma can live free of symptoms by following their treatment plan.