

VAN BUREN COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION

NEWS RELEASE

BETTER HIGHWAYS: SAVE LIVES, SAVE TIME, SAVE MONEY

Lawrence, Michigan	2009 #12
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RELEASE: Immediately	

VAN BUREN COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION ENCOURAGES YOU TO "SHAKE YOUR MAILBOX" ON OCTOBER 24TH

THE ROAD COMMISSION WANTS YOU TO KNOW . . .

The Van Buren County Road Commission is asking its county residents to prepare for winter by shaking their mailbox.

Governor Jennifer Granholm has officially proclaimed Saturday, October 24 as 'Shake Your Mailbox Day' in Michigan. Shake Your Mailbox Day is a joint effort on the part of the road commission and the United States Postal Service (U.S.P.S.).

"Many homeowners have started the practice of changing batteries in smoke detectors when clocks are changed for daylight savings time," Engineer-Manager, Lawrence B. Hummel said. "In the same manner, Shake Your Mailbox Day reminds homeowners of the importance of preparing their mailbox for winter."

"Record snow falls in recent winters have led to an increase in the number of mailboxes damaged by heavy snow thrown from passing plows," Hummel said. "Many of the mailboxes damaged by winter snow removal have become loose after years of use. Damage to these posts and receptacles could have been prevented by proper routine maintenance."

Although the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Van Buren County Road Commission have policies in place regarding replacement of mailboxes that have clearly been damaged by winter maintenance operations, road agencies have never assumed responsibility for mailbox damage caused by flying snow being plowed from the roadway.

"We understand that damage to mailboxes is inconvenient to residents and we want to minimize problems this winter," Hummel said. "The majority of mailbox damage is caused by thrown snow. Taking time to tighten screws and secure mail receptacles now can prevent the need to repair a box in the cold of the winter."

"If the mailbox moves when shaken, this is likely an indication the mailbox and/or post may not be able to withstand standard snow removal operations and should be repaired or replaced prior to the onset of winter," Hummel said.

This is also a good time to replace loose hinges on the mailbox door and to replace or add reflective house numbers to not only protect workers but to allow emergency responders to easily find your home.

Mailboxes are one of the only objects allowed by law to be placed in the road right-of-way. The location and construction of mailboxes must conform to the rules and regulations of the U.S. Postal Service and standards established by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) in "*A Guide for Erecting Mailboxes on Highways.*"

"We will be out in coming weeks reviewing roadsides for obstructions and preparing for winter maintenance operations," Hummel said. "Each year we find mailboxes erected during the summer that pose a serious roadside hazard to motorists and a liability risk for homeowners. Although milk cans filled with concrete, brick structures and other items are artistic, they present very real dangers."

If you have questions on rules and requirements with respect to the construction and placement of your mailbox, please contact the Van Buren County Road Commission at (269) 674-8011, or via email at vbcrc@comcast.net

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