

Van Buren County Road Commission

2009 Winter Newsletter

BETTER HIGHWAYS: SAVE LIVES, SAVE TIME, SAVE MONEY

Van Buren County Road Commission • 325 West James Street • Post Office Box 156 • Lawrence, MI 49064 • (269) 674-8011

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Road Commission Participates in Michigan Local Government Benchmarking Consortium

The Van Buren County Road Commission recently became a member of the Michigan Local Government Benchmarking Consortium which is administered by the Michigan State University Extension. Benchmarking is a tool designed to help local governments improve services and, potentially, decrease costs through measuring performance and implementing best practices that enhance service delivery. The purpose of the Michigan Local Government Benchmarking Consortium (MLGBC) is to bring together cities, townships, villages and counties from all over the state to produce meaningful and relevant performance measures for the purpose of benchmarking and sharing of best practices.



The Van Buren County Road Commission provided the MLGBC with detailed information specific to the Van Buren County Road Commission's road repair and maintenance program, parks and recreation, and fleet maintenance. On November 9, 2009 representatives of the Van Buren County Road Commission met with consortium members in Lansing not only to review the 2009 Benchmarking Report, but also to make improvements to performance measures and determine new measures so as to enhance data reliability and consistency. While these

improvements are being made to the performance measures, the final report will not be made available by the MLGBC. The Road Commission is committed to providing assistance to the MLGBC as a working member so as to learn from its peers and implement best practices that enhance service delivery.

For more information about becoming a member of the Michigan Local Government Benchmarking Consortium contact Nicole Bradshaw at 517.353.1619, or visit www.msue.msu.edu/slg

Road Board Pays Tribute to Retiree David A. Hunt retired on September 25, 2009 after serving the Road Commission as a dedicated Road Maintenance Employee for over 32 years. Dave will be missed by the Road Commission, and the residents of Pine Grove Township which he served for many years. We wish Dave and his wife the very best in their retirement years!

Staff on the roads is down from 43 in 2006, to 35. The Road Commission will continue to work harder, and smarter to provide the levels of service expected by the residents of Van Buren County and its township partners.

Road Commission Recognized by Career Connections Employment Consultants

On October 6, 2009 the Van Buren County Road Commission received an award from Career Connections Employment Consultants of Van Buren Community Mental Health Authority for being an outstanding supporter of persons with disabilities.

During 2009 the Road Commission employed a crew approximately six individuals on the Kal-Haven Trail through Career Connections Employment Consultants. Career Connections provides employment-related support to persons with developmental disabilities, mental illness and other disabilities. The Van Buren County Road Commission has been a proud partner with Career Connections since 2008.

Van Buren County Road Commission Reminds Motorists: "Don't Crowd the Plow!"



The Van Buren County Road Commission, together with the Michigan Department of Transportation and the County Road Association of Michigan, have announced a joint education effort aimed at urging motorists to remember good driving habits in winter weather conditions that will make the roadways safer using the familiar safety slogan again this year, "Don't Crowd the Plow!"

"Road crews put their lives on the line every day to keep Michigan roads safe for everyone," said County Engineer-Manager Lawrence B. Hummel. "Motorists must remember to drive with caution no matter how much salt we use or how often the roads are plowed."

Road crews must have ample room in order to safely clear the many miles of roadway of snow and ice. "Motorists must do their best to minimize distractions and focus on driving and changes in road conditions," Hummel said. "Every year, despite the flashing lights, poor driver behavior near snowplows leads to collisions that can be deadly".

The following reminders are offered for all motorists:

- Snowplows have limited visibility and drivers cannot see directly behind their trucks;
- Snowplows often throw up snow clouds reducing visibility on all sides of the truck;
- Motorists should never attempt to pass a moving snowplow on the right. With new wingplow technology, the blade can clear the shoulder and the lane of travel simultaneously. Motorists attempting an illegal pass through a snow cloud on the right and/or shoulder of the road most likely won't see the plow blade and run the risk of a serious crash; and
- Always wear your safety belt and allow extra time to reach your destinations this winter.

Hummel added, "For the safety of everyone, motorists should use extreme caution when traveling in winter weather conditions. We can't emphasize this enough: Don't Crowd the Plow!"

Road Commission Employee Receives APWA Award

Linnea Colgren, Account Clerk at the Van Buren County Road Commission, recently received an award from the American Public Works Association for her participation in the APWA Emerging Leader's Academy. The Emerging Leader's Academy is a year-long program which provides leadership and management training within the context of Public Works. The class project investigated various social media networks to determine whether they could, or could not be used to help Public Works.



APWA President Larry Koehle, Linnea Colgren, and Sue Hann

The Van Buren County Road Commission has released the information from the class project, and has since started its own Facebook page. Information is posted on Facebook by the Road Commission regarding news, projects, safety and much more. These postings on Facebook foster communications with our elected officials, the public and Road Commission employees.

We invite everyone to become a "fan" of the Road Commission on Facebook. If you have any questions regarding the use of Facebook, or how to become a fan, please contact Linnea Colgren at the Road Commission at 269-674-8011, or via email at linneacolgren@vbcrc.org.



ROAD COMMISSION'S SNOW PLOW POLICY

1. Normal operations of the Van Buren County Road Commission are scheduled between the hours of 7:00 AM and 3:30 PM Monday through Friday.
2. Each winter storm will be treated as an individual occurrence. Routine scraping and ice control will be performed during normal work hours.
3. Routine snow removal operations will begin on County Primary Roads, as a first priority. These roads include Red Arrow Highway, Blue Star Highway, and all roads with the "County Road (CR)" designation. Local Roads (streets and avenues) and roadways within subdivisions are given secondary priority.
4. Weekend operations and/or overtime operations are authorized as follows:
 - A. In the event of a snowfall in excess of four (4") inches, the most critical locations on selected County Primary Roads will be covered, as conditions permit.
 - B. Unusual ice and/or wind conditions causing hazardous driving, or impassable conditions, on the affected areas of the road system, as conditions permit.
 - C. In the event of a snowfall in excess of eight (8") inches, authorization shall be extended to cover the Local Road system of the affected area(s), as conditions permit.

In all cases, minimum crew sizes will be utilized to cover the affected areas.

5. Every effort within the physical and financial resources of the Road Commission shall be made to keep the roads in a safe and reasonable condition for public travel.



Road Commission Calendar

Regular Meetings of the Board of County Road Commissioners:

December 3 and 17
January 7 and 21
February 4 and 18
March 4 and 18
April 1 and 15

All meetings are held at the Administrative Offices in Lawrence at 7:00 PM, unless posted otherwise.



The Road Commission will be closed for the holidays as follows:

December 24 and 25
December 31 and January 1

HAPPY HOLIDAYS from all of us at the Van Buren County Road Commission!

Road Commission Staff

Lawrence B. Hummel.	County Highway Engineer-Manager.	vbcrc hummel@comcast.net
.	Department of Public Works Director
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Linnea Colgren	Account Clerk.	linneacolgren@vbcrc.org
.	Board of Public Works, Secretary/Accountant.
LuAnn Johnson.	Secretary/Receptionist.	vbcrc@comcast.net

Road Commissioners & County Board Representatives

Gregory H. Kinney.	12-31-14
Chester "Chip" Ray.	12-31-10
John T. Roosevelt.	12-31-10
Alain E. Svilpe	12-31-12
Jean A. Stein	12-31-12
Comm. Tom Erdmann.	Board Representative
Comm. Richard Freestone.	Board Representative

NOTE: If you do not wish to receive this Newsletter, please contact Jill Brien at the Road Commission Office either by phone at 269-674-8011, or by email at jillbrien@vbcrc.org.