

VAN BUREN COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION

NEWS RELEASE

BETTER HIGHWAYS: SAVE LIVES, SAVE TIME, SAVE MONEY

Lawrence, Michigan	2011 #13
DATE: October 11, 2011	CONTACT: Lawrence B. Hummel, P.E. Engineer-Manager Van Buren County Road Commission Post Office Box 156 Lawrence, Michigan 49064 PHONE: (269) 674-8011
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County Observes 3rd Annual Shake Your Mailbox Day

THE ROAD COMMISSION WANTS YOU TO KNOW . . .

The Van Buren County Road Commission is asking residents to prepare for winter by shaking their mailbox. Gov. Rick Snyder has officially proclaimed Saturday, Oct. 15 the 3rd Annual "Shake Your Mailbox Day" in Michigan.

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

Shake Your Mailbox Day started in 2008 as the innovative idea of one county frustrated by resident's complaints of damaged mailboxes. The County Road Association of Michigan and the United States Postal Service joined forces in 2009 for a statewide campaign.

"In most instances where mailboxes are damaged the snow plow doesn't actually hit the mailbox," Lawrence Hummel said. "The force of snow thrown from the roadway is enough to knock down a loose mailbox. Damage to these posts and receptacles can often be 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 hit by a snowplow, road agencies have never assumed responsibility for mailbox damage caused by standard snow removal operations.

"Taking time to tighten screws and secure mail receptacles now can prevent serious headaches later," Lawrence Hummel said. "If the mailbox moves when shaken, the mailbox and/or post may not withstand standard snow removal operations and should be repaired or replaced prior to the onset of winter."

The Van Buren County Road Commission and U.S. Postal Service remind residents that this is also a good time to replace loose hinges on the mailbox door and to replace or add reflective house numbers to allow postal workers and 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 the *Roadside Design Guide*.

“We will be out in coming weeks marking roadsides and preparing for winter maintenance operations,” Lawrence 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 significant dangers to motorists.”

If you have questions on what is permitted, please contact the road commission at (269) 674-8011 or via email at vbcrc@comcast.net.

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