

# Van Buren County Road Commission

## 2011 Summer 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



### Van Buren County Road Commission Already Sharing Services as Suggested By Governor Rick Snyder

Governor Rick Snyder is encouraging local units of government in Michigan to explore possibilities for sharing or consolidating services that result in taxpayer savings. While the governor may not be aware, the Van Buren County Road Commission has been sharing and/or consolidating services for, in some cases, many years.

"You tend to assume nothing is happening when you aren't aware of what is already taking place", stated Van Buren County Road Commission Engineer-Manager, Lawrence B. Hummel, P.E. "I believe that to be the case when it comes to road commissions and shared services."

Examples of service sharing include the Road Commission contracting with local municipalities to take over some, or all of the road maintenance on some local roads within those communities; in particular, subdivisions. In some cases, this involves only winter road maintenance (ice control and snow plowing). In other cases it involves both winter and summer road maintenance (gravel road grading and dust control applications). And in still other instances the contract is for a specific project, such as sealcoating, street sweeping, providing sewer services, etc. Through these collaborative efforts, the cities and villages are able to benefit from cheaper prices than they could get on their own. And in some cases, municipalities have taken advantage of the Road Commission's invitation to rent its equipment and/or labor forces for special projects. This results in savings to the municipalities through renting equipment the Road Commission already owns, rather than purchasing equipment that the municipality would rarely use, or renting from an outside source.

In 2007, the Road Commission contracted with the Van Buren ISD and other local school districts for their use of the Road Commission's wash bay. This cooperative effort has provided taxpayer savings in several units of government.

The Road Commission is currently working cooperatively with the Kent County Road Commission to perform bridge deck repair on Blue Star Highway over the Black River. In addition, discussions are being held regarding consolidation of fleet maintenance to help reduce costs to provide fleet maintenance repair services.

"These are just a few examples of the way we save money by working with the communities of Van Buren County," Hummel stated. "There are many other examples that are too numerous to mention here. Michigan's road-funding crisis has been going on for quite some time, and the Van Buren County Road Commission has been in a cost-cutting mode for many years. As a result, we're already doing many of the things that the governor has championed for local governmental agencies."

The Facebook logo, consisting of the word "facebook" in white lowercase letters on a blue rectangular background.

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## Customer Service Requests Being Tracked by New Computer Software

The Van Buren County Road Commission has implemented a software program to process and track citizen concerns and service requests. The software, known as Service Requests created by Precision Computer Solutions, Inc., was recently installed replacing an antiquated carbon paper message system.

The new software makes the process of reporting citizen concerns to the Van Buren County Road Commission easier and faster for citizens who call, and will help to ensure that the Road Commission is able to track and follow-up on those concerns. In addition, the Road Commission can search the database of previous reports to determine whether there is a history of similar problems in an area, or whether an issue has been previously reported. With the old system, finding this information was extremely time consuming, or simply impossible.

"We don't yet know the full extent of what we'll be able to do with the software", said Lawrence B. Hummel, Engineer-Manager. "We do know that this system will enable the Road Commission to better track problems over time, including both when they were reported and by whom, as well as how the Van Buren County Road Commission responded. This system truly is a very big benefit for the agency, and a great step forward technologically".

## Engineering Technician-Permit Officer Retires

Engineering Technician and Permit Officer, Gordon Hover, retired from the Van Buren County Road Commission on May 31, 2011. Gordon was hired in 1975 and worked for 35 years as a devoted Road Commission employee. Gordon has assisted many contractors, State of Michigan employees, local officials, and the public at large through his duties at the Road Commission. He has been the person to go to with any questions regarding the history of the roads in Van Buren County and his expertise will be sorely missed.

The Board and employees wish Gordon and his wife, Jan, the very best in their retirement years!



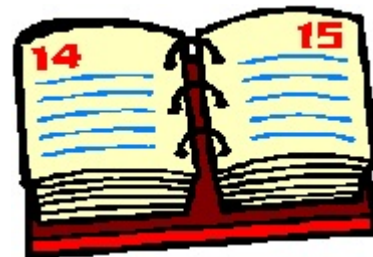
Gordon Hover and Lawrence Hummel

## **Road Commission Calendar**

Regular Meetings of the Board of County Road Commissioners:

July 13 and 27  
August 10 and 24  
September 7 and 21

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



The Road Commission will be closed for  
Labor Day, Monday, September 6<sup>th</sup>

**Summer Hours Work Schedule**  
**6:00 AM - 4:30 PM (Monday thru Thursday)**  
 If there is an emergency situation when we are closed, please call the Sheriff's Department (269-657-3101) and they will contact the Emergency Duty Superintendent.