February 26, 2016

RE: Road Commission Manager’s Report

Following is a summary of activities completed for the period of January 25, 2016 to February 26, 2016:

CREW RELATED:
Our Staff and crews continue to put in long days working hard to keep the roads safe for our residents and visitors. Snow removal activities have dominated most days in the last month, including extra hours and weekends when needed.

On those days where we are not experiencing active snowfall or icing conditions, our crews remain busy knocking back snowbanks at intersections, in areas prone to drifting, and trucking snow out of areas where storage is not available. When conditions allow our crews have been busy cold patching pot holes as well, particularly on M-22 (more information on M-22 below). In addition to these activities our crews are removing dangerous trees in the road rights of way.

Our mechanics have been focused on completing scheduled routine maintenance for the various pieces of equipment that comprise our fleet while responding to unforeseen repairs as needed. As the end of winter is in sight, they have begun getting ready the various pieces of equipment that will be needed once the shift from winter to spring is upon us such as street sweepers.

CITIZEN CONTACTS:
We investigated contacts from property owners on the following roads:
- Center Highway, question about snow removal.
- Bright Road, question about snow removal.
- Leelanau Court, question about snow removal.
- Dorsey Road, question about snow removal.
- Lincoln Road, question about damaged mailbox.
- Omena Point Road, reported a down tree.
- M-22, question about road surface (referred to MDOT).

STAFF RELATED:
Our Finance Manager and Deputy Clerk are finalizing yearend accounting and reporting responsibilities and preparing for our upcoming audit. Our Engineer has been assembling year-end information reporting and asset management information. We are seeing an increase in permit applications for new construction projects for the coming year. Our Engineer is soliciting bids for our annual materials as well as preparing plans and specifications for 2016 construction and maintenance projects.
I continue to contact the various local units of government to gauge interest in road related projects that they might be interested in. I spent a significant amount of time during this period focusing on safety related items such as coordinating training events, maintaining existing safety program practices, and implementing new safety related policies.

I am very aware of the condition of M-22 in the area north of Lakeview Hills Road and south of Suttons Bay. M-22 is a State trunkline and is owned by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), not the Leelanau County Road Commission (LCRC).

The LCRC has a service agreement with the MDOT and we do maintenance and snow removal for them, but only under their direction and as their budgeting allows for. So folks see our crews and trucks out on this road and understandably assume that it is our road, but it is not. We are merely acting as their contractor when working on MDOT trunklines.

Any road starting with an “M” designates that road as an MDOT trunkline. So M-72, M-204, M-109, M-201 are the other MDOT roads in Leelanau County. In total, MDOT has about 100 miles of road in Leelanau County. Our service agreement with the MDOT is a very beneficial agreement for us and the residents of the County as it allows us to own and operate equipment that we would otherwise struggle to afford if we did not have this source of revenue.

I have been in contact with my counterpart at the MDOT and he and I have been doing what we can to advocate on the behalf of our residents to address the condition of M-22 between Suttons Bay and Lakeview Road. This stretch of road was initially constructed using concrete in 1951 and has simply run its useful life. The MDOT has completed several sectional repairs over the years, but even many of these have run their useful life and are failing, creating voids, or potholes. As a result this stretch of road is in very rough shape.

Under MDOT’s direction, our crews have been placing cold patch material in the potholes when the conditions are appropriate. We are doing what we can to try and hold it together but it by no means will correct the deficiencies.

MDOT is pursuing funding and they are hopeful that they will be able to do some additional sectional repairs in the coming years. Unfortunately MDOT has no current plans or funding to reconstruct this section of M-22. Believe it or not the MDOT has other sections of road that are in even worse shape than M-22 that they can not secure funding for. Unfortunately the MDOT is in the same position that all of the road agencies in our State are in, their resources are simply not enough to satisfy the decaying transportation infrastructure.

In 2012 Michigan ranked dead last of all the States in road spending per capita. The recession that Michigan endured was another setback and we are just now starting to see levels of funding on par with where they were before the downturn in the economy. Our Governor did recently sign into law a new transportation plan that will help
somewhat, but even with this additional revenue, we will not start seeing any funds resulting from that until mid 2017 at the earliest.

I hope this clarifies the LCRC’s relationship to M-22. We work extremely hard to provide a safe transportation network to the residents and visitors of Leelanau County but the repairs made, and repairs needed for M-22, are not something that we control.

MEETINGS ATTENDED:
- January 25, 2016: Leelanau County Planning to discuss road map updates.
- January 27, 2016: TC TALUS Board Meeting and MDOT Staff meeting to discuss the process to transition to a Metropolitan Planning Organization.
- January 28, 2016: 911 Advisory Committee meeting.
- February 2-4, 2016: County Engineers Workshop.
- February 5, 2016: Met with representatives from Suttons Bay, Leland and Northport Schools bussing programs to discuss road condition evaluations.
- February 9, 2016: County Board of Commissioners.
- February 9, 2016: Cleveland Township Board meeting.
- February 10, 2016: Fire Chief’s meeting.
- February 10, 2016: Roadsoft roadway asset management system course (1 of 2).
- February 11, 2016: Emergency Planning Committee meeting.
- February 11, 2016: Roadsoft roadway asset management system course (2 of 2).
- February 16, 2016: Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating course.
- February 18, 2016: County Road Association regional council meeting.
- February 19, 2016: Michigan Department of Transportation to discuss long term maintenance and construction projects.
- February 23, 2016: Representatives from the Villages of Empire, Northport and Suttons Bay to discuss the upcoming road millage.
- February 23, 2016: Michigan Department of Transportation to discuss 2016 maintenance and construction projects.
- February 24, 2016: Met with representatives from Safety Products to discuss high visibility safety clothing program.
- February 24, 2016: Met with representatives from the Grand Traverse Band to discuss their Bingham Road project.
- February 26, 2016: Met with representatives from the Fishtown Preservation Society.

SPECIAL FEATURE, SPRING WEIGHT RESTRICTIONS:
We do our best to preserve and maintain the 598 miles of roadways that comprise our County road network throughout Leelanau County. Not all roads are constructed the same. In an effort to preserve the roads that are more susceptible to damage from heavy vehicles, once the road surface and underlying soil begins to thaw from the winter freeze we impose special speed and weight restrictions on most of our roads. This prevents heavy vehicles from traveling on the susceptible roads and damaging them.
The more robust roads that comprise our road network have been identified and these are the roads where the heavy vehicles must limit their movement to. This is common practice throughout the State. It is also the reason why this time of the year you might start seeing construction equipment being delivered to sites where work is scheduled to begin once the conditions allow as the contractors are positioning their equipment prior to the restrictions being imposed. Restrictions in Leelanau County will begin on February 27, 2016.

More information on spring weight and speed restrictions is present on our website. A road map that illustrates those roads where restrictions are present can be viewed here: http://leelanauroads.org/pdf%202/All%20Season%20Road%20Map%202015.pdf

While the above information does not include all of the activities completed by the Leelanau County Road Commission Staff, it is intended to provide an overview of our activities for the referenced period. To be added to the distribution list for this report, please email me at dwagner@leelanauroads.org.

Respectfully,

Daniel P. Wagner, P.E.
Managing Director
Leelanau County Road Commission