

Stärke County Highway Department  
 Monthly Report  
 October 2013

Summary

**MOWING** – The 2013 County mowing program is complete. We are now mowing on an as-needed basis. Overall the program was successful. There are a few things that we believe can be changed to improve next year's mowing program. The GPS system will allow us to plan mowing routes that are more efficient. This should cut down the overall time each cycle takes and will save on fuel. (There will be less backtracking across roads that have already been mowed.) We will also make more use of the part time mowers. We have found them more efficient than our regular drivers because they only have to focus on mowing. We increased our part-time mowing line item in the 2014 budget to allow us to enhance our part-time program. We believe that part time help could also help us with our snow plow operations. Because of this the Department would like to extend the period that the mowers have been authorized to work from October to indefinitely, year round. Additional funds are not necessary because one of our mowers quit last month. The elimination of the deadline will allow greater flexibility in our long range planning and day to day assignments.

**WINTER PREPARATIONS** – The Department was busy throughout September preparing for winter operations. The preparations have been as follows:

- 1) Sand spreaders have been added to all the trucks
- 2) Our salt commitment and price have been locked in with Morton Salt. Last year we paid \$53.16 per ton. The initial offer from Morton for this year was \$56.00 per ton. After negotiating and getting other quotes we were able to get this price lowered to \$48.00 per ton with a commitment of 525 tons. This price is \$1.00 less per ton than the State CPA price with Cargill Salt which is \$49.00 per ton. In most years it has hurt the county to not be a part of the State CPA bid. This year an LPA can get and less time is spent negotiating
- 3) We have trucked in 3500 tons of sand for use on the roads during inclement weather. Last year we paid \$6.50 a ton. This year the price is \$6.00 per ton. We are currently trucking in the sand from IMI materials in Plymouth. We may be able to cut the sand price even further if the sand produced at the plant in Hanna can be used by our trucks. Most of our drivers believe the Hanna sand is not of a good enough quality to use for winter operations. We have trucked in about 80 tons of this sand to sample during our first winter storm. If it turns out that it works as well as our current sand we would be able to save an additional \$.50 per ton
- 4) We have refurbished and readied all of our truck plows

As of today the County Highway Department is prepared for winter weather. Bring on the snow!!



**ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM** – The 2013 Chip Seal and Gravel road improvements are complete. The Department also hot-mixed one mile of road on Range road and repaired a serious flaw in Toro Road just east of US35. We completed 112 miles of road improvements this summer. A complete report on the improvements will be included in November's report.

**BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS** – During September Dale Conley and Terry McIntire renovated an unused shed on our grounds and transformed it into a Sign Shop and Equipment storage area. They did the work within our maintenance and repair budget and should be commended.

**GPS** – The GPS system is fully installed and is working as planned. It is already increasing our efficiency and providing many benefits. A more in depth report will be made available in December after we have accumulated more data.

## BRIDGE REPLACEMENT AND REPAIR –

**Bridge Approaches** – We have completed our program of bridge approach repair. Over the course of the summer the Department was able to repair and maintain 14 bridge approaches.

**Bridge 50** is still closed. It will be replaced next summer.

**Bridge 43 construction update:** Please see the attached Pay Application # 1 as provided by JCI Bridge Group for the Bridge 43 Replacement Project, covering the work completed in September. Note that the work completed to date per Pay Application # 1 represents 31.8% of the total awarded bid amount of \$177,367.06, including the completion of the demolition of the old bridge, the completion of pile driving, placement of most of the rip rap, and the start of falsework construction in preparation for the bridge concrete pour.

Two optimistic things about the pile driving so far:

- 1) No previous bridge concrete was encountered in conflict with the end bent # 1 piling. This points toward a possible savings to the base bid amount as the plan quantity assumed such concrete would likely be encountered.
- 2) Based on the depths driven to design bearing at the first row of piling, it is apparent that the final total piling length should likely be substantially below plan quantity, and thus a savings to the base bid amount.

At this point I can report that there is a savings of \$5,398.9 due to the under-run of pay item 21 for the piling, and a savings of \$1,682 due to the under-run of pay item 32 for removal of encountered concrete from previously existing bridge structure, (only 1.5 CYD was encountered in conflict with the new construction, and there is little or no chance that we will encounter any more at this stage).

**SAFETY PROGRAM**-We have initiated a weekly safety program that is working well. A different driver makes a safety presentation each week. We are also taking most of our drivers to a day of safety training in Plymouth on October 18<sup>th</sup>. The training will include snow plow safety. We have initiated a boot program within our Department that will help us meet OSHA standards and improve our PPE coverage.

**PASER** – We have begun our PASER road assessments and they should be complete by December 1<sup>st</sup>.