

Starke County Highway Department

Monthly Report

October 2014

Summary

ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM – As of today our summer road improvement program is almost complete. We have improved 120.32 miles of roadway (63 chip sealing, 9.27 fog sealing, 11 asphalt paving/wedging, 30.55 re-graveling, and 7.5 crack sealing). This represents the highest total on record at the Highway Department. We still have about 18 miles of improvements to complete; 10 miles of gravel roads, 4 miles of fog sealing, and 4 miles of crack sealing.

This is the first year the Starke County Highway Department has fog sealed and crack sealed. Overall these two new improvements went well and the County should continue to use them. It took a little time to get the crack sealing operation streamlined but now that it is we can complete about a mile a day. Sealing cracks is an inexpensive way to keep water from prematurely deteriorating the roadways. It costs about \$750 to crack seal a mile of roadway that has moderate cracking. It may not look great but it really extends the life of a roadway.

The fog sealing was also successful. When done well a fog seal eliminates dust from a chip sealed road, helps seal in the chips, helps ice/snow melting in the winter, and generally looks better than a chip sealed road. It is also relatively inexpensive at about \$1500.00 per mile. Timing and weather are the most important factors to consider when fog sealing and at times these created issues during our fog seal operation. But we now have a pretty good handle on it and should be able to fog seal even more efficiently in the future.

SAFETY – We are happy to report that during this summer (June 21st to September 21st) there were no reported accidents or injuries at the Highway Department. This despite the fact that we drove over 89,000 miles during this period and did a lot of road work that required traffic control and much time spent on the roadways. The drivers have done a great job of making safety the top priority while doing roadwork, so much so that they routinely police themselves during the operations. They are aware that another driver's lapse in judgment can put all of the workers and the public in danger. All of the drivers will be attending IPEP's (Indiana Public Employers Plan) annual safety training that is being held in Valparaiso on October 21st. We have also scheduled a winter operations safety training through Purdue-LTAP that will be held at our garage on November 19th.

LOCAL BRIDGE REPLACEMENTS LaPorte Construction has begun replacing bridge 31 (800E over Eagle Creek, .2 m north of CR50S) and will begin replacing bridge 86 (900S over Bogus Run, .2 m west of CR100W) in the next few weeks. Both bridges have a November 31, 2014 completion date. The bids for bridges 70 (CR50E over Smith Ditch, .1 m south of CR500S) and 79 (CR450S over Smith Ditch, .2 m west of Range Road) are being opened today. We have also sent out an RFP for the design of two bridges to be constructed next summer; Bridge #1 on CR700N over the Robbins ditch, .3 miles W of CR500E and Bridge #71 on CR100E over the Smith Ditch, .5 miles S of 500S.

INTERSECTION SAFETY – SPORZY'S FOUR WAY STOP – We will be adding the four way stop tomorrow. The locates have been completed. We have already painted the no parking lines in front of Sparty's. Advance warning signs will be in place through next summer to get drivers acclimated to the change.

WINTER MAINTENANCE – We are busy preparing the upcoming winter. We will begin hauling in sand next week. Our first load of salt will be delivered this month. We are also stocking all necessary winter equipment such as plow blades, underbody blades, and tires. We will also be attaching the sanders to the trucks. Our new plow routes have been established based on the information the local schools provided us. These new routes will focus on having main roads, bus routes, and business routes open first.



