

Starke County Highway Department  
 Monthly Report  
 April 2015  
 SUMMARY

**March has been a busy month for the Highway Department. Winter operations wound down, spring cleanup/repair began, and preparations for summer operations are in full swing.**

**SNOW PLOWING/REMOVAL** – Overall winter operations went well this year. We plowed just over 90,000 miles of roadway and used 1325 tons of salt. The chart below compares last year’s winter plowing to this year’s. We had just over half the number of snow events we experienced in 2013-14 and just over have the amount of snowfall. We cleared 18.21 lane miles per hour per driver. The ideal speed is about 17.5 lane miles per hour. By slowing down our hourly rate we increased safety and lessened the amount of property damage. We will be removing the salt/sanders from the trucks and connecting the chipper bars for summer paving operations.

**WINTER PLOWING BY SEASON**

YEAR	SNOW EVENTS	SNOWFALL IN INCHES	PLOW HOURS	PLOW HOURS PER DRIVER	MILES CLEARED	MILES CLEARED PER HOUR PER DRIVER	SALT USED	SAND USED
2013-2014	60	91.95	7282	381.56	136165	18.69	1933	10151
2014-2015	36	50.95	5006	294.83	91161	18.21	1325	7408

**SPRING ROAD MAINTENANCE** – Each Spring we take time after snow plowing is over to make repairs made necessary by the winter plowing and by the thawing frost in the roadways. The drivers have been patching their areas. Patching however, is only a temporary fix. This year we are adding a more permanent fix to our Spring road repairs. The asphalt in patched potholes almost always “pops” back out and the pavement around the hole weakens causing more potholes. This year, to repair severe potholes and “blowouts” caused by the thaw, we will be wedging cold mix asphalt . A wedge is in essence a small paving job ranging from 20 ft. to 250 feet in length. BY adding stone to potholes and then paving a wedge over the entire area, it creates a longer lasting, more permanent fix. Last week we made almost 1000 tons of this patching material. This should be enough to wedge most of the blowout areas in the County. We will be wedging throughout April and May, weather permitting.

We also have a crew of trustees working around the County to cleanup excess stone from last year’s chip seals and to repair and yards that may have been affected by the plows.

We will also be cutting brush, grading roads, picking up trash,

**BRIDGE INSPECTIONS** – Our biennial bridge inspections have begun. USI Consultants is performing the work and the first round of inspections has begun. The formal, engineer led inspections are in addition to our Department led maintenance inspections for each bridge. The maintenance inspections focus on erosion control, bridge cleaning, brush control, and minor pavement and drain repairs. These inspections began today and should be complete in two weeks.

**SAFETY AND TRAINING** – We have continued our weekly safety sessions. We are now focusing on Spring/Summer operations safety. Last week two trainings were held at our garage. Our liability carrier, Bliss Mcknight, led a training session at our garage last Wednesday. The topics covered were: mower safety, dump truck safety, work zone traffic control, brush chipper safety, and other topics relevant to Spring maintenance operations. Laura Slusher from LTAP/Purdue also gave a presentation at our garage last Thursday that focused on what a driver should be thinking about on a daily basis to stay as safe as possible,. She also presented Starke County’s crash statistics for the last ten years. We are happy to report that the last two years’ crash totals are well below average and continue to drop. We believe this is a result of a cooperative effort of the Sherriff’s Department, The Highway Department, effort of our local elected officials, the local media, and most importantly the motoring public.

**CULVERT INVENTORY/REPLACEMENTS** – We recently completed the County’s first comprehensive culvert inventory. We counted and inspected 585 pipes and small structures throughout the County. As we replace pipes we will also be able to keep track of when the new pipe was placed. This information will help us with ordering new material, finding the source of drainage problems, and allow us to plan more effectively. During the inventory we identified 23 pipes that need to be replaced. We will work on completing these this summer. We will also be replacing pipes that are on the roads we have identified for paving.

**THIRD MECHANIC POSITION** We have posted the new mechanic position that was approved last month. The application deadline is April 17<sup>th</sup>. The interviews will take place immediately after that. June 1<sup>st</sup> is the target date for the new hire to begin work.

**INDOT FUNDED PROJECTS**

Des #	Route Name	Location	State Funded amount	Local Match	Total Amount Funded
810052	CR300E	CR 300E from Division Road to Culver Road	\$2,394,000.00	\$1,289,180.00	\$3,683,180.00
1173447	COUNTY WIDE	Starke County, County wide Sign Replacement	\$90,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$100,000.00
1297421	CR100E	Bridge#154 on CR 100E over Robbins Ditch, .4 mile N of 400N	\$881,920.00	\$220,480.00	\$1,102,400.00
1382091	COUNTY WIDE	County wide bridge inspections all bridge 20' and greater in length	\$63,841.51	\$15,960.38	\$79,801.89
1383472	CR 1200E	Bridge over the Yellow River, .5 mi N of CR250S	\$640,000.00	\$160,000.00	\$800,000.00
<b>FUTURE OBLIGATION TOTAL</b>			<b>\$1,675,761.51</b>	<b>\$406,440.38</b>	<b>\$2,082,201.89</b>

**ROADWAY**

**Road Improvement program** We will begin making our paving asphalt this month. We are looking forward to our busiest paving season on record. We have identified 75 miles of roadway that needs to be repaved. Although we do not have the funding to complete all of these we believe we will get a good percentage of them done. We still have to meet with the Commissioners' in their areas to pare down the list.

**BRIDGE**

**LOCAL BRIDGE REPLACEMENTS:**

**Bridge 70 (CR50E over Smith Ditch, .1 m south of CR500S)** is now 50% complete. LaPorte Construction has just restarted this project.

**Bridge 79(CR450S over Smith Ditch, .2 m west of Range Road)** is currently being designed. Construction should begin sometime this summer

**Bridge #1 on CR700N over the Robbins ditch, .3 miles W of CR500E** is currently being designed. Construction should begin this summer

**Bridge #79 CR100E over Smith Ditch, .5 m S of CR500S** – LaPorte construction will begin this project in April