

Starke County Highway Department

Monthly Report

February 2015

Summary

SNOW PLOWING/REMOVAL – We plowed 12 of 31 days in January. The trucks plowed 25615 miles and used 494 tons of salt and 2032 tons of sand. Last January we plowed 30 of 31 days and use almost three times as much salt and sand.

ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM – We have completed our second stage of assessments and would like to complete the third during February. The third step is working with each Commissioner and getting their opinions on the recommended road repairs. We would like to schedule times to meet with the Commissioners this month so we can present the updated list at the March 2nd meeting

SPEED LIMIT REDUCTION Last Fall Council member Dave Pearman sent the Highway Department and asked if we could work with INDOT to possibly lower the speed limit on SR8 past the new jail at least to the railroad tracks. INDOT did a quick study based on our request and agreed to lower the speed limit up to the train tracks coming out of Knox from 55 to 45 mph to accommodate the increased traffic count that will be caused by the new jail. The posted limit is now 45MPH. We believe this will make it safer for our officers when entering and exiting the new facility.

INTERSECTION SAFETY – Purdue university has completed their preliminary of three county intersections (**350S and 200E, 700E and 200N**, and 700S and 300E). These recommendations were preliminary until traffic counts were complete. They are now complete. Based on their recommendations and traffic counts we would like to add a four way stop at the intersection of 350E and 250E. Here is a quick summary of the findings:

- 1) **350E/250N**---This does warrant a four way stop because of a lack of sight distance that cannot be remedied by defoliation. There has been one reported accident at this locations. There have been many complaints about the lack of safety at this intersection.
- 2) **700S/300E** does not warrant a four way stop at this time.
- 3) **700E/200N** ---There have been six reported accidents at this location. Most of the accident reports list sight distance problems caused by foliage. Instead of immediately installing a four way stop, it is recommended that we ask the property owners for permission to cut back the foliage at the intersections to improve sight distance. If this does not work we may need to go to a four way stop.

CONSTRUCTION INSPECTOR SAVINGS - Last March a Construction Inspection position was created as a cost saving measure. Under the 2014-2015 construction plan for Starke County (One major road improvement at 300E and six bridge replacements) the estimated inspection costs were \$590,000.00 (\$290,000 for the County and \$300,00) for the State. It was estimated at the time that the 2014-2015 cost of doing the inspection ourselves was \$146,000 (96,000 for two years' salary and benefits, \$30,000 in engineering fees that the inspector could not do, and \$20,000 in testing. This works out to be \$73,000 for each year. The good news is that the actual testing fees were far under the 2014 estimate of \$10,000. The actual testing cost was \$840. The actual engineering fee (three invoices, including tonight's \$1,722) totaled \$9191.00. The salary and benefits for 2014 totaled \$35,500 . The 2014 total inspection cost was \$45,531 for an additional savings for the County of \$27,469 on top of the \$71,000 saved this year by the County by not using consultants. That means we saved 98,469 in 2014 by using our own inspector. We are looking at similar savings in 2015. That means we will have saved approximately \$54,000 more than our original savings estimate for the County of \$290,000 during the 2014-5 construction seasons. We would like to use this savings to add paving miles to our road improvement plan for 2015.

