

COUNTY ROAD AND EQUIPMENT REPORT

DECEMBER 2022

ANNUAL REVIEW

This report was prepared for the Lake Area Weekly in FFB and includes a little more than just County Road info:

Several county road projects have been completed in 2022. Silver Rock Road received a grant from the Arkansas Unpaved Roads Program (AURP) to replace a water crossing. A bottomless arch was installed which allows for the natural passage of fish and wildlife beneath the road. The creek that crosses the road eventually flows into the Middle Fork of the Little Red River which is the home of several endangered species. The road was raised several feet to ensure that the road does not flood or wash out again. We have a meeting with AURP coming up soon to discuss another project for 2023.

Half Moon Road is nearing the completion of base work. After we finish installing new base material, new drainage and slope, the road will be turned over to Rogers Group who will asphalt the road all the way to the Stone County line. To qualify for this grant, the residents being serviced by the road must meet certain economic criteria. At the time the application was due, Half Moon Road was the only county road which qualified. Since the latest census data has been received, we have another road which will qualify. We will be eligible to apply for another grant for that road as soon as we are once again eligible (one full "off" year is required.)

Henderson Road received an asphalt overlay which was a State-Aid funded project. The project ran from the Clinton city limits to Highway 65 North. Drainage was improved and the shoulders were rebuilt. New striping was applied.

Holley Mountain Road was striped this year from Highway 16 East to the Stone County Line. A new guardrail was installed in 2021 and repaired in 2022 after it was damaged. Road striping was completed on Eglantine Road, Sheep Shank Road, and New Hope Road as well.

Repair work was completed on many bridges in 2022. Bridge work to the substructure is invisible to the eye as you drive through but takes many hours of work and materials to complete the job. Van Buren County is blessed with an incredible road staff who takes bridges seriously.

Work on The New Road a couple of years ago has proven to be effective and made for a safer 2022. Signs, rumble strips, and guardrails were added near the intersection of Burnt Ridge Road and The New Road on a dangerous curve. Since the initial installation, no wrecks have been reported. That curve was one of the most dangerous road spots in Van Buren County.

On the economic front, sales taxes are showing improvement compared to 2021. Many ask how alcohol sales are affecting the sales tax revenue. The answer is that we have no way of knowing. The Department of Finance and Administration does not break down sales tax data by source. Several small businesses sprung up in 2022 and Van Buren County appreciates them all!

Improvements continued through 2022 at 911. Enhanced systems are replacing old and outdated systems which serve to benefit all county residents. Computer Aided Dispatch is being installed now which will eliminate the need for dispatch to log physical sheets of call papers. At the crucial time when seconds count, 911 is counting the seconds and working with all aspects to speed response time and reduce any confusion. You will get a world class experience when you need it the most. Van Buren County should be proud of our 911 team!

Listed within this report is but a small portion of the great things that have occurred in the county in 2022. I eagerly anticipate new business announcements and new growth. I am excited to improve roads and watch as Van Buren County grows. We should enter 2023 with optimism and hope. Like the classic song by the Carpenters, "We Have Only Just Begun." May your wallet be large and your county government be small.

Cheers to 2022 and a prosperous new year!

Dale James, Van Buren County Judge