

COUNTY ROAD AND EQUIPMENT REPORT

February, 2025

New this month:

Winter Weather Preparations:

We prepped for an ice/sleet event and, thankfully, received mostly rain. Very few issues from the last weather event. We sanded/salted bridges in the northwest part of the county. This week, we are prepping for another round of winter weather.

We had to close the Rabbit Ridge/Brickey Road low water crossing. The structure sustained damage during the flooding rains this month and part of the crossing broke and sunk significantly. A heavy duty truck could cross but a car cannot. We received the grant for the replacement of this structure just in time.

Dale has been working on the subgrant for the Rabbit Ridge/Brickey Crossing Grant. Lots of paperwork involved, even after the approval was granted. Update – Work will begin immediately after the Oyler Road Project is complete. Bids for the arch top crossings were scheduled for opening on February 18 at noon.

Work is still in progress on our part of the Oyler Road Project.

Weather has been our enemy on the roads. Freezing and thawing and excessive rains have taken a toll. Most gravel roads have potholes. We are digging those out and repairing as quickly as we can as the weather allows.

MAINTENANCE:

Quarry operations at full capacity.

Working business as usual as inexpensively as possible to rebuild monetary resources from the recent disaster. The disaster's price tag for Van Buren County was approx. \$600,000.00. The disaster was a year ago and we have yet to recover financially.

GRANT PROJECTS:

The Rabbit Ridge/Bricky Road low water crossing grant has been approved. The total value of this grant is just under \$1,000,000.00

UPDATE – COMPLETE The Baker Lake Project is valued at \$600,000 dollars. A bridge and relief pipes will replace the current series of failing pipes.

WE RECEIVED THE OYLER ROAD GRANT! We applied for the maximum amount of \$500,000.00. The county match portion of the grant is the base work. We are replacing the culverts and building up the road which should have plenty of settling time before the asphalt is applied. Total project price tag is valued at \$1.5 million. Base work will begin in late 2024 with pavement applied in 2025.

Lake Cliff Road Bridge Project – Federal Grant application submitted and looks promising. Total price tag of approx. \$1 million. UPDATE – Feasibility study has been ordered.

Scotland Bridge Project - - UPDATE – WE RECEIVED WORD THAT A FEASIBILITY STUDY HAS BEEN ORDERED. Federal Grant application submitted and looks promising. Total price tag of approx. \$1 million.

Archey Road Bridge Project – State and Federal Aid funded, County pays 2%. Total price tag of approx. \$1.5 million.

The Federal Infrastructure Program appears to have some extra money in it so I have applied for an off-program grant to build a new bridge at Shirley which would be constructed parallel to the current historic Shirley Train Bridge. Contrary to popular rumor, the county IS NOT entertaining even the thought of removing the historic structure. Traffic would move to the new structure and the old structure would remain in place for the historic value, pictures, etc. The value of this proposal is approximately \$2.5 million. Update – Feasibility study has been ordered.

FEMA reimbursement for the declared disaster – Reimbursements can take a very long time to receive. I hope to receive \$150,000 - \$175,000. Governor Sanders approved the disaster on May 9 and VBC is listed as an approved county. After submitting all the required paperwork, we received a book for each impacted road to be completed. I will go on the record stating that I believe the intention is to create so much work that we throw up our hands and give up on the request for money. NOT A CHANCE of that happening on my part!