

The Life of a Pothole

Potholes sprouted this spring season in Michigan as we balanced the change of seasons with the annual freeze thaw cycle. The largest numbers of potholes typically pop up in the spring – and this year -2010 is no exception!

Potholes form when water flows into cracks and freezes as temperatures drop. The frozen water then expands, and breaks the surrounding pavement. Many times passing traffic also impacts the surface causing additional breaks in the pavement. The base of a road may also contribute to potholes. As the ground freezes in the winter, the water in the base freezes and expands, forcing the pavement above upward.

Unfortunately, as long as there are roads and change of seasons in Michigan, there will be potholes. And that means pothole patching. The KCRC uses cold patch material which is the best alternative in cold or wet weather and hot mix asphalt.

Our staff is constantly monitoring our roadways, but if you spot a pothole, please call our office at 269-381-3171 or send us an email at info@krcr-roads.com.

Remember, when you see our KCRC crews patching potholes – slow down and please be careful!

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Managing Director's Message

On March 22, 2010 we had the opportunity to address the Michigan House Transportation Committee Public Hearing on transportation funding along with the Michigan Department of Transportation, Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority and various transportation officials.

As you drive our roads in Kalamazoo County and you look around; you may think the roads are not in that bad of shape – so what is the issue? As you drive our roads and roads throughout this great State – remember this may be as good as it gets.

KCRC has had to realign priorities based on funding. Dollars spent on Construction & Preservation efforts, have shifted to Routine & Preventative Maintenance – less in reconstruction related projects and more chip seal. However, in 2010 our primary road chip seal budget was also \$322,000 shy of our need to stay on track with an every 5 year chip seal preventative maintenance program.

Major Challenges:

- Higher Gas Prices = fewer gallons sold = less fuel tax revenue
- Higher Fuel Efficiency = fewer gallons sold = less fuel tax revenue
- Funding is not keeping up with inflation!

The Michigan Transportation Fund (MTF) is the primary source of funding for Michigan's road program with gas tax collections and vehicle registration fee sources that have slid in the economic downturn. These MTF dollars make up 64% of our budget. Since 2004 our MTF has fallen and our MTF 2010 budget is now below our 1998 figure! Even if the economy improves, gas tax revenue will decline with the trend toward more fuel efficient vehicles. There has been no increase in the gas tax since 1997 and only a \$.04 increase in 26 years. While the cost of materials and doing business has increased. For example in 2005 our salt prices were \$28.00/ton and for 2009 they were \$61.00/ton – a 218% increase!

Please don't assume we haven't been "tightening our belt" – we have been and we are getting close to running out of belt holes! We continue with our efficiency reviews including

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Storm Water Runoff

Managing storm water runoff is not just the responsibility of the organized government jurisdiction – we can all take up the solution challenge.

Reduce Water Runoff:

- Collect rooftop into rain barrels that can be used later to water gardens and lawns
- Install rain gardens to encourage storm water storage and infiltration if soils are appropriate
- Shut off automatic sprinklers during rain storms
- Use pavers or stone cobbles in constructing a driveway, sidewalk or patio

Reduce Contaminants Carried by Runoff:

- Pick up pet waste
- Minimize the use of fertilizers and pesticides in summer
- Vegetate bare soil areas in your yard and garden; Mulch areas before the plants take hold
- Never dispose of fuels and oils, cleaners, degreasers or other household maintenance products on the ground or storm sewers
- Maintain vehicles and fuel-powered equipment – reducing fuel and anti-freeze leaks
- Sweep debris such as grass clippings or soil off hard surfaces and properly dispose - don't hose down such materials. Do not fill ditches or sweep into storm sewers.
- Small actions taken by everyone will place less of a burden on the overall municipal effort. Taking small steps to prevent runoff and reduce pollutants will make a big improvement in water quality

Source: *Basin Bites & Technical Tidbits/St. Joseph River Basin*

Award of Merit

KCRC received an Award of Merit by the American Council of Engineering Companies as recognition for the 35th Street Bridge project completed in 2008 – Comstock Township. URS our consultant on this project submitted the entry. This will be the second award for the 35th Street project!

Staff Highlights

Paul A. Spitzley, Project Engineer began on February 8th. Paul is a December 2009 Graduate of Michigan State University with a Bachelor of Science in Civil and Environmental Engineering. He had been employed with Fitzgerald Henne & Associates, Inc., while in school since 2005 as a Staff Engineer.

Brian Franklin, Permit Agent will begin April 12th. Brian has been an employee of KCRC since 2000, most recently in Job Group 2 of our field operations/sign shop.

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adding wing plows to our trucks, experimenting with new products, cross training personnel, public/private; public/public partnerships, joint purchasing and increased use of technology. We have implemented cost cutting measures including capital outlay items deferred, positions eliminated and/or realigned, reduced the scope of projects, and benefit plan/wage reductions.

Federal funding is also in distress as agencies are required to provide a match to these funds. If we cannot match the federal funds collected (of which only 92% of what is collected returns to Michigan), those dollars will be given to other states. Note: these dollars are not used for maintenance such as pothole patching and snow removal.

Since 2004, the percent of Kalamazoo County roads (regardless of the jurisdiction), in excellent and very good condition have decreased, while those in very poor and poor condition have increased. Without further investment, more roads will be pushed from good condition to fair condition to poor.

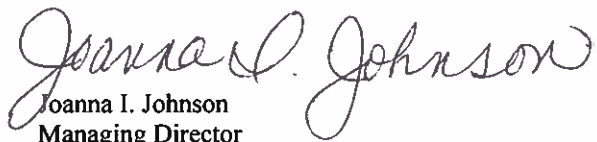
The impact of reduced funding will reduce our services and reduce our investment in our infrastructure. The reality is we cannot continue to provide the same level of service. We can't keep kicking the can forward because it will cost us more in the future. KCRC continues to operate as the public should expect in improved efficiency and cost cutting measures. Undertaking the same adjustments any business or individual must do at home.

The state of our infrastructure touches everyone. Without continued investment we will be putting the burden of a deteriorating infrastructure system to the leaders of the future.

Our State leaders have no easy task with a variety of competing priorities and reduced funding levels. If you think our infrastructure is vital to Michigan, please take the time to contact them, they need to hear from you.

We often hear that infrastructure is a key component for economic development, job growth, tourism, and an overall priority for this state - As you drive our roads and roads throughout this great State – remember this may be as good as it gets.

Sincerely,



Joanna I. Johnson
Managing Director



Kalamazoo
County
Road
Commission

**2010 Primary Road
Capital Improvement Plan Projects**

35th Street from I-94 West Bound off Ramp to Kalamazoo River Bridge

Comstock Township

This section of 35th Street will be reconstructed to improve the vertical grade. The project also includes the addition of a southbound lane from the Kalamazoo River Bridge to I-94. 1500' of Miller Drive will be relocated 400' to the North. The existing traffic signal at Miller Drive will be relocated to the new intersection.

Funded by Federal Surface Transportation Program

Estimate \$1,180,000

Stadium Drive from 4th Street to 6th Street

Oshtemo Township

Mill and place 2.25" hot mix asphalt overlay, intersection improvement to extend the left turn lane

Funded by Federal Surface Transportation Program

Estimate \$430,000

26th Street from DE Avenue to D Avenue

Richland Township

3" hot mix asphalt overlay and shoulder widening

Funded by KCRC

Estimate \$240,000

24th Street Bridge over Portage Creek

Schoolcraft and Brady Townships

Bridge rehabilitation to replace superstructure of a structurally deficient bridge

Funded by State Local Bridge Program

Estimate \$900,000

Stadium Drive at Venture Park

Oshtemo Township

New Traffic Signal

Funded by KCRC and Oshtemo Township

Estimate \$150,000

9th Street at Quail Run

Oshtemo Township

New Traffic Signal

Funded by KCRC, Oshtemo Township and private/public partnership

Estimate \$150,000

Texas Drive at 8th Street

Texas Township

Texas Drive at 8th Street intersection realignment

Abandonment of 660' Feet of Texas Drive, construction of new portion of road that will meet 8th Street perpendicularly and also add a turn lane

Funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and Texas Township

Estimate \$274,196.91

Sprinkle Road at G Avenue

Comstock and Richland Townships

Intersection improvement, traffic signal upgrade to add a left turn phase on G Avenue.

Funded by State Safety Program

Estimate \$300,000

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N Avenue at 29th Street
Comstock and Pavilion Townships
Intersection design and reconstruction
Funded by KCRC
Estimate \$200,000

Kalamazoo River Valley Trail, Segment 2

City of Parchment, City of Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo Township and Cooper Township
Intersection of Riverview Drive and Mosel Avenue, north along the Kalamazoo River, Westnedge and ending on D Avenue east of the Kalamazoo River; 5.82 miles of hot mix asphalt non-motorized path.
Funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and Kalamazoo County Parks Foundation
Estimate \$1,694,000

Kalamazoo River Valley Trail, Segment 3

Kalamazoo and Comstock Townships
1.77 mile Hot Mix Asphalt Paved Non – Motorized Path through Kalamazoo and Comstock Townships ending at Sprinkle Road near the Kalamazoo River. This project includes 3 wooden boardwalks and a pedestrian bridge spanning the Kalamazoo river.
Funded by Federal Enhancement and Kalamazoo County Parks Foundation
Estimate: \$1,695,000

We are committed to providing a safe and convenient road system for our county motorists. As our customers and as residents of Kalamazoo County you are also entitled to excellent service from us at all times.

We aim to provide answers to your service requests. We encourage our residents and the motoring public to report road conditions that need attention. To make sure our service to you is prompt and courteous we strive to continually improve our methods of contact.

Office hours are 7:30am – 4pm, Monday through Friday, 269-381-3171 or call 911 for emergencies.

Our services on the web can be found at www.kalamazoocountyroads.com and are designed to keep you updated on the news and information from our agency. You can contact us via email at info@krcr-roads.com.

The goal of the Board of County Road Commissioners of Kalamazoo County is using our expertise, energy and funds to provide the safest and most convenient road system possible, and to contribute to economic development and high quality of life throughout the county.

Educational Opportunities Planned at KCRC:

To provide educational opportunities for local officials we have planned the following presentations at KCRC at NO COST in 2010.

Soon to be scheduled

Building the County Road Map - Yesterday & Today

Asset Management for Local Officials
September 15th 9:00am – 12:00 noon

Please contact Debbie Hill at KCRC to register at 269-381-3170 extension 203.

Watch for additional opportunities in the next e-newsletter.

2010 Board of County Road Commissioners of Kalamazoo County

To better serve our County and local officials, each Road Commissioner has also been assigned as a liaison to various townships we serve as follows:

Kent L. McCauley – Chairman; Brady, Climax, Pavilion
Kenneth R. Oscarson - Vice Chairman; Kalamazoo, Prairie Ronde, Wakeshma
Jeffrie M. Maddox –Comstock, Cooper, Ross
Dennis J. Berkebile –Charleston, Schoolcraft, Texas
Daniel J. Moyle –Alamo, Oshtemo, Richland