

Starke County Highway Department

Monthly Report

December 2014

Summary

ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM – Now that our winter preparations are complete we have been taking advantage of the snow free weather and have been hauling in #11 stone for next summer's road improvements. If we continue to get good weather we may be able to have all material necessary for these improvements stockpiled by the first of the year. As of now we plan on increasing our paving miles from 11 to 30. We will be decreasing our chip seal miles from 63 to 35 while maintaining our crack sealing and re graveling miles. The increase in paving is possible because we have been able to get caught up in our chip sealing and now can divert some of that money to real paving, which in the long run will benefit the County more than straight chip sealing. We have completed a preliminary list for the 2015 road improvements and will present this to the Commissioners for their approval in January after our PASER road assessments are complete.

SAFETY/TRAINING – There were no accidents or injuries in November at the Highway garage. It has now been ten months since we've had either one. The training focus for November was winter maintenance and snow plow safety. Our weekly meetings have focused on daily inspections of the trucks, keeping the trucks clear of salt, and step safety. We are also implementing a new policy for mailboxes. When practical, we will now have the drivers assist the sign man in repairing mailboxes in their area. This has been shown in other local agencies to reduce the amount of mailbox damage on a driver's route. On Tuesday, November 25th, Rich Domonkos, of LTAP/Purdue University gave a training class at the garage on snow plow safety and awareness. He emphasized to the drivers how important it is to get in the right mindset for plowing and that safety is the number one concern at all times. He also discussed new plowing techniques and stressed the importance of calibration of their spreader equipment to help optimize salt sand usage. He may be returning to the garage in the next month to help us with these calibrations.

LOCAL BRIDGE REPLACEMENTS:

Bridge 31 (800E over Eagle Creek, .2 m north of CR50S) is now complete and reopened last Wednesday, November 26th.

Bridge 86 (900S over Bogus Run, .2 m west of CR100W) is now 80% complete and should be reopened in the next week or so, depending on weather.

Bridge 70 (CR50E over Smith Ditch, .1 m south of CR500S) is now 30% complete. Laporte Construction originally was to begin construction in March but the good weather has enabled them to get an early start.

Bridge 79(CR450S over Smith Ditch, .2 m west of Range Road) Construction of the bridge will begin in March of 2015

Internal cure concrete has been used on these bridges and is working out well

Mark Wilson of JPR (Jones, Petrie, and Rafinski) has submitted the last design invoice for these four bridges. The original design estimate for the four was \$140,000 the final cost was \$94,000. This is a savings of \$46,000. This savings was partly made possible through the hard work of JPR but more importantly because of the Department's ability to now do some of the preliminary design work themselves. We are also saving on the back end of the projects because of our new inspection program. When we proposed this new position we estimated the savings on inspections. We now know the exact amounts. The estimate cost of hiring consultant inspectors for the 300E project and the three bridges worked on this year was \$472,000. Our actual costs, because we did the inspections ourselves, has been \$68,000, for a savings of \$404,700. About half of this savings was realized by INDOT for their portion of the 300E inspections. This benefits the County because it makes the state more willing to fund our Capital projects. The proof of this is the five projects we currently have funded by the state that the Superintendent will report on to the state LPA district project director tomorrow.

- 1) 300E
- 2) Bridge inspections
- 3) Sign replacement funding
- 4) Bridge 154 replacement (100E over Robbins ditch, .4 miles N of 400N)
- 5) Bridge "7 replacement (CR1200E over the Yellow River, .2 miles N of CR250S)

RFPs for the design of two bridges to be constructed next summer; Bridge #1 on CR700N over the Robbins ditch, .3 miles W of CR500E and Bridge #71 on CR100E over the Smith Ditch, .5 miles S of 500S have been submitted and reviewed.

INTERSECTION SAFETY – LTAP-University is doing safety evaluations for three of our intersections (350S and 200E, 700E and 200N, and 700S and 300E. We should be receiving their recommendations for these in the next month.

RFP decision. Because of the saving JPR has shown we may want to go with them but we will give the other three submitters time to rework their numbers. We will recommend a decision to the Commissioner's at the Dec. 15 meeting.

SCILL Center mechanic work. We have finished an outline for the program but want to get full approval from the Departments effected before we submit for final approval on December 15th

EASEMENT on SR10 just south of the Bass Lake beach.

LOGO contest with the four high schools.