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## *Important Dates:*

April 5, 9:00am  
Board Meeting

April 19, 9:00am  
Board Meeting

## *Office Hours:*

**Monday - Friday**  
**7:30am – 4:00pm**

14110 Lakeshore Drive  
P.O. Box 739  
Grand Haven, MI 49417  
(616) 842-5400  
[www.ottawacorc.com](http://www.ottawacorc.com)

Brett Laughlin  
Managing Director

## Mutual Aid Award

In an effort to improve service levels, six Road Commissions (Ionia, Kent, Muskegon, Montcalm, Newaygo, and Ottawa) developed a mutual aid agreement.

The agreement sets conditions for the use of mutual aid and the rates for reimbursement before an emergency raises the need for such assistance.

These six Road Commissions worked to obtain permission to communicate with one another using the

Michigan Emergency Public Service System frequency.

While the agreement has not yet been tested in an emergency situation, the cooperation will result in improved efficiency of the members.

In recognition of their cooperative efforts to improve travel in their counties, representatives from the Ionia, Kent, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo, and Ottawa County Road Commissions were

presented a best practice award for the mutual aid agreement.

Below is a photo of the Road Commission representatives receiving the award at the annual County Road Association of Michigan conference held in Lansing this past March.



## Pass the Salt

**What is it about salt on icy roads that helps make driving conditions safer?**

Most people are aware that rain and melting snow can turn into ice. When this ice sets up on the roadways, there is a need to break down the icy layer, making it possible for tires to maintain traction on the surface of the roads. This is where salt on icy roads comes into play.

The presence of the salt causes what is known as freezing point depression.

That is, salt helps to lower the temperature at which water will freeze.

Placing salt on icy roads helps to inhibit the formation of ice, as well as break down any ice that may have already formed. The environment is suddenly altered and it is less possible for the accumulated water particles to freeze into a slippery and dangerous layer of ice.

Salt has been a very economical and abundant resource for winter maintenance operations.

However, the cost of salt has increased over 200% the past ten years from \$30.13/ton in 2001 to \$61.10/ton today..

The Road Commission has developed a salt management plan and utilizes a 60% salt to 40% sand mixture to provide the most cost effective yet service orientated practice for winter maintenance operations.

More information about the salt management plan can be found on our website.

## Best Practice Award



Shown above are Randy Nagelkirk and Jerry Brower who implemented the recycled tires on the wing plow cutting edges.

The Ottawa County Road Commission is literally driving the concept of reduce, reuse, and recycle to new heights with its innovative use of recycled tires.

After years of paying \$100 or more for wing plow cutting edges that barely lasted a season, a \$7.00 solution was developed using sliced tires.

The sliced tire cutting

edges, which required a few modifications on the plows, last more than a full season.

In addition to the obvious savings from buying less expensive blades less frequently, the Road Commission no longer has to pay tire disposal fees.

A best practice award was given to the Road Commission in recognition

of the innovative solution to tire disposal and cutting edge replacement at the annual County Road Association of Michigan conference held this March in Lansing.



## Safe Roads for Everyone

### Sign Retroreflectivity

In January 2008, the Federal Highway Administration issued a final rule establishing minimum levels of retroreflectivity for regulatory, warning, and guide signs.

Signs not included in the new requirements are signs with blue or brown backgrounds as well as "No Parking" signs and other signs that do not

give direction or warning to a motorist.

The Road Commission will use an expected life management method to establish a baseline minimum sign life for various types of sign sheeting. Engineer Grade sign sheeting has an expected life of 7 years and High Intensity Prismatic sheeting has an expected life of 10 years based on manufacturer

warranties.

Upon the expiration of the expected sign life, a control set will be assessed to determine if signs they represent still have the minimum retroreflectivity requirements, or if the signs need to be replaced.

The Road Commission maintains approximately 20,000 signs alongside the county road system.



Shown above is a technician measuring the retroreflectivity of a stop sign.

## Arnold Retires

Congratulations to Larry Arnold as he recently retired as the 2<sup>nd</sup> shift mechanic from the North Holland garage.

Larry started his Road Commission career in 1984 as a general mechanic at the Zeeland

facility.

The North Holland facility was built in 2001, Larry and his fellow Zeeland garage employees moved to the new location.

He accumulated almost 28 years of experience

servicing plow trucks and other Road Commission equipment.

Larry plans to enjoy retirement while spending time with his family and friends.

We wish Larry the best.