

PRESS RELEASE

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The Page County Board of Supervisors sponsored two open forums in February, 2009 to discuss methods to reduce expenditures for Secondary Roads. These meetings were held in advance of the Public Hearing for the FY2010 Budget so that public input could be considered regarding the budget for Secondary Roads. Included in the discussion was the status of Seal Coat roads throughout the county. Other recent cost saving measures and suggestions were briefly discussed as well. Also discussed was the scarification and recompaction of the asphalt treated base on the failing seal coat roads, which will allow for re-sealing of the roads or use of the existing materials as an upgraded aggregate surface in the future.

Although many issues were discussed, the status of seal coat roads was the primary focus. Most of the Seal Coat roads in Page County have suffered advanced deterioration in recent years due to winter / spring thaw cycles, saturated ground conditions and increased use of heavy grain wagons.

Costs have increased for seal coating roads to the point that expenses for seal coat roads are four to five times that for an aggregate surface, and in some cases, seal coat roads could have been paved with the investments made over the years for oiling. Following the open forum meetings, the Supervisors directed the County Engineer to develop a system for prioritizing the seal coat roads and separate them in low, medium, and high priority groupings. Considering input received in the open public forums, written input, and experience of the Secondary Roads Staff, a priority system was developed. Items considered in this evaluation include:

- Traffic Count
- Road Classification
- System Continuity (connectivity of major routes)
- Proximity to a Town/City
- Number of Residences
- Number of Businesses
- Terrain and Maintenance Issues
- Distance to a Pavement (asphalt or concrete)

After considering the above criteria, a prioritized list was developed with the following miles of existing seal coat roads:

High Priority	57 Miles
Medium Priority	31 Miles
Low Priority	23 Miles

Although no change in status is expected immediately for any of the priority categories, without an increase in funding from gas taxes or local funding, it is anticipated that the level of service will have to be adjusted on the seal coat roads.

- The High Priority miles are considered important links in the overall county system and include some roads that may be upgraded from seal coat to asphalt. This upgrade would address needs and demands from higher traffic counts and heavy loads that use these particular roads. Other segments of roads in the High Priority category would remain seal coated.
- The Medium Priority roads are also expected to remain a part of the seal coat system at this time, and be maintained as such. Status of these roads will be reviewed at strategic points in the future to determine if sufficient funding remains to support these roads in the system.
- Low Priority roads are those that currently do not make a critical connection in the paved system or provide paved system continuity, support few residences or businesses, or have a comparatively low traffic count. These roads are expected to be maintained as long as possible as seal coat surfaces, but restoration to a seal coat in the future (after inevitable deterioration with age) would only be possible with funding above and beyond the current sources. Roads in this category that were scarified in 2008, or are being scarified in 2009, will not be seal coated at the present time.

It should be noted that the surface treatments (limestone, sealcoat, asphalt, or concrete) used on some of the roads within the county will be changed over time to better suit the type of traffic that typically uses the road. For example a road that has heavy vehicles routinely using the segment of road, such as a rock quarry traffic or heavy grain wagons, would be expected to have a full pavement system or be surfaced with limestone, depending on the factors used to establish the priority ranking and funds available. Seal Coat roads do not serve well in heavy weight vehicle applications, and over time will be phased out of that type of use.

The changes to be implemented on the roads evaluated will take ten years or longer to be implemented. During that period, Page County will make every effort to preserve the seal coats in place or make the period from scarification to re-seal coating as short as possible. The public should be aware, however, that a scarified road will typically sit through one or two winters before an initial reseal is applied.

This process will eventually convert the roadway system within the county to a priority based system, with the more critical roads having pavement, sealcoats on commonly used roads, rock on remaining local roads that include residences or major agricultural operations, and earth surface on public roads accessing agricultural ground only. Such a re-evaluation of the road system is necessary as the needs continue to change in rural Page County and the system has not been conceptually amended in over fifty years.