



Fixing roads

I would like to thank the numerous individuals who volunteered and took time out of their busy schedules to represent the numerous townships, farm areas, and rural communities at the meeting concerning road issues in Grant County District 2 this past month. Being educated about road issues and road funding can be very enlightening to say the least. This meeting served not only as an educational meeting, but also as an expression of which roads within each area are major roads for each community as compared to minor and/or collector roads that are not as heavily traveled.

In my role as a county commissioner, I often get request to “fix” roads. Yes, I know how to “fix” roads. The employees of District 2 also have the knowledge to “fix” roads. “Fixing” roads is not as simple as getting the equipment and manpower to the site. For the most part, it takes money to “fix” the road, and determining how to finance the labor, the equipment, the materials, as well as the fuel and repairs to “fix” the road can be a problem.

We all know that in the past 3 ½ years, fuel prices have quadrupled in price, going from less than \$1 to almost \$4 per gallon. While fuel prices have increased, the amount of travel has decreased. Funding for county roads primarily comes from a fixed fuel tax per gallon. Please be advised and/or remember that road fuel tax is a set price per gallon, which means that when the price of fuel increases, the road fuel tax remains the same. Therefore, the revenue counties receive from this tax has nothing to do with total dollars spent on fuel. Counties receive 4.5 cents per gallon on gasoline road tax and 3.7 cents per gallon on diesel road tax.

There are 231 county commissioners across Oklahoma – three commissioners per county. Ask any of them if they know how to “fix” roads and the answer will always be the same, “If your road needs fixing, it takes know-how but more importantly, it takes money to do it.”

Again, District 2 employees, as well as myself, have the know-how – we just don’t have an abundance of money. In this situation, it takes someone who knows how to best utilize resources to stretch their money for the best of the county.

I am actively involved in working with Oklahoma senators and representatives to find a way to increase funding for county roads. Not only are county budgets tight, but also the state is dealing with a tight budget. Monies that originally were collected for roads, such as motor vehicle tags and a higher percentage of the road fuel taxes, have

been diverted to other areas over the past decades. We are also looking to find new money, such as from wind energy that can be collected for county roads and bridges.

Please become actively involved in becoming educated in county government so you can be sure that your tax dollars are best spent for the betterment of all of Grant County, including the courthouse offices, the county health department, the sheriff's department, as well as road districts 1, 2 and 3.

On October 8, the Association of County Commissioners (ACCO) along with the Circuit Engineering District #8 (CED) will be hosting a County Transportation Partners meeting in Enid. This meeting is open to the public, and I am inviting each of you to attend. More information will be coming in the next few weeks, but mark your calendars now to attend!

As always, please contact me with any of your county government concerns including road concerns at the District 2 shop located at 524 North Front Street in Medford, or by phone at 580-395-2859. You may also reach Robert Moss, Road Foreman, at 580-541-8953, or myself at 580-541-8950. For more information be sure to check out District 2's website at www.grantdistrict2.com.

Respectfully submitted,
Cindy R. Bobbitt, Commissioner
Grant County District 2