

County Update

The Monthly Newsletter For The Belmont County Engineer's Department

Happy 4th of July!



Fred's Desk



HERE WE GO AGAIN! Heavy rains this past Sunday evening (June 19th), which fell mainly on the northeast part of the county, caused flash flooding which destroyed several homes, washed away cars, trucks, two county bridges and did millions of dollars of damage. The main area of damage was in the Willow Grove area, but US Route 40 from Blaine to Brookside, along with areas in Martins Ferry and Bridgeport were covered with mud and debris. On this past Monday, the Belmont County Commissioners declared an emergency in Belmont County. We are awaiting word from FEMA whether or not a federal disaster will be declared.

The bridge on the lower

end of Richland Township T-436 (Rehm Road) shown below left and the bridge on Colerain Township T-426 (Sloan Run) were both destroyed by the flooding. Many other bridges stood, but the embankment behind their abutments washed away, closing the bridges. Most bridges in that area were covered with debris, including vehicles. Also, much of the bridge railing was damaged. Many areas of the pavement berm were washed away leaving drop-offs along the roads several feet deep. Our crews spent all week getting the roads and bridges opened.

We have had near record rainfall this spring, which during April and May, caused over a dozen road-way slips.

We were scheduled this past Monday to begin the repair of two slips on CH 56 (Mt. Victory Road), but that had to be delayed due to the flooding. This road was closed in May, and will remain closed until we get these two slips repaired. Hopefully we can get started shortly.

The good news is that our two active contract projects are nearing completion. Beams were set last week on the second bridge on CH 48 (Wegee Road) and all of the piling has been placed on CH 16 (Nixon Run Road). Both projects should be completed within the next couple of weeks.



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County Road Projects

During the evening hours of June 19th, parts of Belmont County received up to 2-1/2 inches of rain in a three hour period. There are unconfirmed reports that as much as 3 inches fell.



Twp. Rd. 281



County Road 4



Twp. Rd. 426



Twp. Rd.. 316



County Road 4



Twp. Rd. 1249

Not So Fun in the Sun

September 11 is a day all Americans remember. That date in 2009 was the day I found out I had cancer and it is a date I will never forget for multiple reasons now. I noticed that a mole on the back of my right ear had become irritated and made an appointment with my doctor. Over the years my wife and I had participated in the local skin screenings that the hospital sponsors and this mole had never been a cause for alarm.

I had this mole so long we thought it was a birthmark. I was told at the time to just watch it for any change as you would for any mole. In the two-week period before the appointment, a lump appeared on the same side of my lower neck. A biopsy was done on both areas the day of the appointment. The week that followed was a long one waiting for a diagnosis. That Friday evening the doctor called with the diagnosis of Melanoma and that it had spread to the lymph node on my neck. My doctor recommended that I go to the James Cancer Hospital at Ohio State University and assured me that I would be in the best of care.

Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States and occurs in two major groups, non-melanoma and melanoma. The former, basal cell and squamous cell are the most common with over one million cases diagnosed each year. Melanoma is much less common but the most serious and is one of the fastest growing cancers worldwide. Limiting your ultraviolet exposure is the best defense as well as early detection by regular skin screenings.

Being self-employed, jobs were put on hold and clients notified, uncertainty ruled.

On October 1 I met with the surgeon, Dr. Theodoros N. Teknos. He explained that because the melanoma had migrated to the lymph node (lump) a complete lymph node resection would be made to remove all lymph nodes on that side of my head, neck and shoulder area. It was also very likely that I would loose at least part of my ear. Reconstruction surgeries would be scheduled later. Because of the large eight hour block of time needed in the operating room surgery could not be scheduled until November 3. In the meantime CT scans were ordered along with many other routine tests. In the month long wait before surgery a regular routine was hard to maintain and anything long term had to be postponed.

The last time I was in the hospital was the day I was born but I had surgery on November 3 and was there for four days. During surgery it was determined that I would not loose my ear and a skin graph was done instead. My wife Liza was thrilled when they brought me to the room saying "you still have an ear!" Good news. The surgery was a success. The pathology report said that eight of eight lymph nodes were removed and tested with five being positive for Melanoma, one of those being the lump on my neck and the others being very small. This information dictated that I have radiation treatments and I was transferred to the care of my Oncologist Dr Kari L. Kendra.

Melanoma does not respond well to radiation but an experimental regime followed consisting of five double dose treatments over three weeks. My final treatment was on January 4, 2010 and was my twenty third trip to Columbus since my initial visit in October. It was about two months before I started feeling human again.

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Summer is coming up and working outside can not be avoided when you're a surveyor. I would urge everyone to use sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher and re-apply often. A wide brimmed hat also reduces exposure to the head and neck. Increased risk factors for skin cancer are fair skin, blue or green eyes, blond or red hair, family history of skin cancer, living in the lower latitudes, excessive ultraviolet exposure (tanning booths) and having had one blistering sunburn before puberty. That last one is the most startling and has to include a large number of people. Any combination of the above factors increases your risk.

Information on detection and prevention is easily found on the web at places like, <http://www.melanoma.org> , <http://www.skincancer.org/> and the James Cancer Hospital at <http://cancer.osu.edu> . Another surveyor's ordeal with melanoma was reported in the July 2009 edition of POB <http://www.pobonline.com/Archives?issue=1864668>

In February 2010 I started taking a pill form of chemotherapy five days each month. I will continue this for two years along with yearly scans for the rest of my life.

I have worked outside all my life, always wore the popular ball cap and seldom used sunscreen unless at the beach. If I can convince one individual to take precautions regarding sun exposure I will consider this soul-bearing a success.

Steven L.Gardner PS

Ohio Valley Chapter PLSO

Note: I have known Steven Gardner for almost 30 years and was shocked when I heard about his fight with cancer. I talked to Steve and asked if I could publish this article in our newsletter. He was kind enough to give permission. This is a message that should be passed on to our friends and families. JP

Deed Stats

MONTH	DEEDS	TRACTS	EASEMENTS
MARCH	226	414	48
APRIL	205	330	71
MAY	199	322	50

Contract Projects



The bridge replacement projects on County Road 48, Wegee Road are about 60% complete. The bridge near the Village of Shadyside (above) was completed and work was started on the second bridge (left) located 2 miles upstream.



The piling project on County Road 16, Nixon Run is progressing and should be done before the completion date.