

County Update

The Monthly Newsletter For The Belmont County Engineer's Department

D-Day
June 6, 1944



Fred's Desk



THE SEVERE STORMS this past weekend brought back memories from 20 years ago, when on the evening of Thursday, June 14th, 1990 (Flag Day), about 5 inches of rain fell in about 1 hour and 15 minutes near Key in Mead Township, the headwaters on Wegee Creek, Pipe Creek and Cumberland Run. With the ground already saturated from above normal rainfall during May and early June of that year, the result of this heavy downpour caused walls of water as much as 20 feet deep to cascade down these narrow, steep valleys as it rushed to the Ohio River.

Twenty-six lives were lost that night, including 12 each on Wegee and Pipe Creeks, and

two small children, a six year old boy and his 5 year old sister, on Cumberland Run. Over 80 residences were destroyed, another 250 businesses and homes were damaged, and scores of vehicles washed away. Damage to county, state and township roads and bridges was severe, making most roadways impassable.

Since roads were closed, electric and telephone lines were knocked down, and no one had cell phones, it was impossible to quickly access the damage. It was feared that more than 100 were missing, and probably drowned. The roadways in the path of the water were either washed away or covered with debris, including trees, rocks,

vehicles, and even a few homes. The bridges on the main road withstood the forces of the water, but the approach embankments were washed away.

The first job was to get the roads passable for emergency workers to begin the search and rescue operation. Our highway and bridge crews, with the help of the Ohio National Guard, the US Army Reserves, ODOT, local contractors and volunteers began the process making temporary repairs to accomplish this.

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May 1994

From the May 1994 newsletter.

Richard Boccabella, who was County Engineer from 1953 to 1976, stopped in for a visit. At the time Mr. Boccabella was residing in De Ray, Florida.

At the annual Employee Safety Training, employees received information about flagging procedures, first aid and other safety related duties.

The County Engineer's Department was in negotiations with CSX Railroad to purchase 3 sections of former railroad right of way. The first section was 2.1 miles that would relocate County Road 10, Maynard Crescent Road and would eliminate a steel truss bridge with a span of 130 feet. It was estimated at the time that it would cost \$350,000 to replace the bridge. The second section of former ROW was 0.65 mile in length for the relocation of Colerain Township Road 438. Again this negated having to spend \$450,000 to replace a 2 span truss bridge which was 170 feet in length. Finally, the third section involved the elimination of the railroad overpass in Lafferty near the Post Office.

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Damage to our roads and bridges was several million dollars, but with financial help from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Ohio EMA (OEMA), National Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) we were able to rebuild our damaged infrastructure. By the late summer of 1991, all repair work was completed.

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) issued a report in 1991 stating that the flooding of 1990 was well in excess of a 100 year flood, meaning the expected recurrence of a flood of this magnitude is once every 100. years.

Today three monuments stand, one near each creek, listing the names of the flood victims who perished on June 14, 1990. Let's keep these victims, their families and friends in our prayers, and as a reminder to us all, never underestimate the power of water.

Move Over and Slow Down

State law requires motorists to move over or slow down when approaching emergency vehicles with their lights activated.

The Patrol's Move Over and Slow Down Public Service Announcements use dramatic Patrol car video footage which visually depicts the importance of the Move Over and Slow Down law. The videos can be viewed at: statepatrol.ohio.gov/moveover.stm

In the PSA's, the Ohio State Highway Patrol remind Ohio motorists to move over or slow down when approaching an emergency vehicle.

Knowledge and compliance of this law is key in protecting the lives of public safety workers on Ohio roadways.

This state law can be viewed in full in the Ohio Revised Code at 4511.213 **Approaching stationary public safety vehicle displaying emergency light.**



CEAO Conferences

The following conferences are listed on the County Engineer's Association of Ohio and can be viewed at their website: <http://ceao.org>.

June 10th - Ohio Land Records Modernization Conference at the Crowne Plaza North on Columbus.

August 13th - Ohio Bridge Conference and Trade Show at the Crowne Plaza North in Columbus.

September 22nd through the 24th - Ohio GIS Conference at the Hyatt Regency in Columbus.

October 22nd and the 23rd - Superintendents and Mechanics Conference at the Mohican State Park Lodge in Perrysville.