

County Update

Volume XXVI, Issue 8
August 25, 2016

Fred's Desk



Belmont County Fair

September 6th
thru
September 11th



Belmont County Engineer's Department
101 West Main Street
St. Clairsville, Ohio 43950
Phone 740-699-2160
Fax 740-695-8894

FORTY YEARS AGO, I was appointed as the Belmont County Engineer when then County Engineer Richard Boccabella retired. In November of that year (1976), I was elected to my first four year term as county engineer. On December 31 of this year, after 40 ½ years, I will be retiring from this elected position. Over the next four months, I will be highlighting some memories of each 10 year period.

1976 – 1985

I began 1976 as Deputy Engineer, having started in that position the previous September. I was on the May primary ballot and was elected to represent the Democratic Party at the November election. Mr. Boccabella retired on June 30th after 23 ½ years as County Engineer, and I was then appointed to complete his term. We had 18 employees in the office, 37 on the road crew and 14 on the bridge crew, for a total of 69 employees. Today, we have 9, 22 & 10 respectively, for a total of 41.

The winter of 1977 started out with a lot of heavy snowfall. An emergency was declared, and the National Guard of Ohio was called in to help open some of the township roads. Also, many of the coal companies in the county used their heavy equipment to help out. In May, heavy rainfall caused a bridge on County Highway 5 (Clover Ridge Road over Pea Vine Creek) to wash away. By July, the county's bridge crew built a new bridge. Also in 1977, the first Jamboree in the Hills was held at Alderman's Airport located on CH 82 (Airport Road).

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During 1977, major renovations were made to all of the offices in the courthouse, and since our offices are in the courthouse, it was necessary to move to temporary locations in St. Clairsville. All the various offices were scattered around town.

The winter of 1978 also started out with a lot of snow. This resulted in many ice jams and flooding along most of the creeks in the county. In June, another bridge collapsed when a concrete ready-mix truck, with 8 cubic yards of concrete, and weighing over 29 tons, tried to cross an old steel truss bridge. This 90' span, on County Highway 4 crossing over McMahon Creek near Neffs, was posted with an 8 ton load limit. A new truss bridge was opened in October.

Also, in 1978, Mall and Banfield Roads were built to provide access to the new Ohio Valley Mall. This major project included an interchange with I-70 which connected to US 40 to the north and the Mall to the south.

In 1979, another bridge collapsed when a truck hauling concrete blocks tried to cross a 48' span steel truss bridge on Smith Township 202 (Water Tower Road). A new steel beam bridge was built and opened later that year. Also in 1979, County Highway 34 (Hospital Hill Road) from Bellaire to Bell View Heights was rebuilt with new pavement and guardrail.

During the 70's and 80's, a lot of strip mining was being done in Belmont County. This meant a lot of coal trucks were using our highways and bridges. Several county highways were closed and stripped mined, and later were rebuilt and reopened. A lot of my time was spent meeting with the various coal companies and working out agreements which permitted them to do their mining.

During 1981, construction began on the building of Interstate Highway 470. This six mile section of 4 lane highway is the Ohio's leg of the Wheeling, West Virginia interstate by-pass. This opened in November of 1983.

1982 started out very cold. On Jan. 10th, it was 10 degrees below zero, followed by, a week later, 20 degrees below zero with snow.. Later that year, and in anticipation of collective bargaining, we developed, for the first time, job descriptions for all of our employees.

In 1984, we had built a new building to house our body shop. Up to this time, we were welding and painting vehicles in the old garage at Lloydsville.

During 1985, the commissioners enacted the permissive sales tax with \$250,000 per year to be used for resurfacing county highways. That was enough to pave over 8 miles per year. At today's prices, that will only be enough to do about 2 ½ miles.

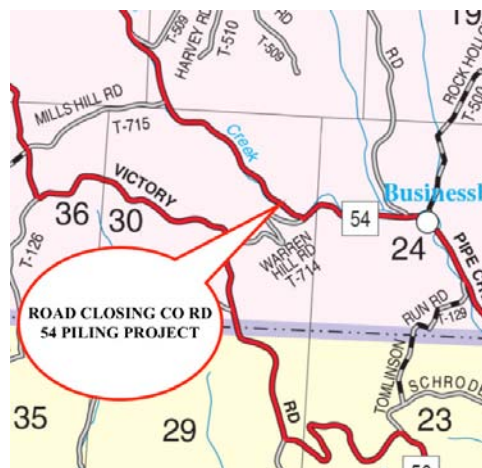
1985 was also the year we began to computerize our office. The computer system was bought with a grant through CEAO. The Radio Shack "Tandy 6000" was a multiuser system with three terminals. A word processor, database and spreadsheet program were the only programs used on the computer.

Next month, I will update you on the events of 1986 – 1995.

County Road 54 Pipe Creek To Close

County road 54 Pipe Creek will be closed to all traffic at a location 400 feet northwest of Mead Township Road 714 Warren Hill beginning at 7:30 AM on Monday August 29, 2016.

The road will be closed for 3 weeks for a slip repair project.



Bid Results

On August 3rd bids were opened for Project 16-4 which is a piling wall project on County Road 54 Pipe Creek Road. The bids were as follows:

- Shelly & Sands - \$134,000.05
- Alan Stone - \$114,194.75
- BBR - \$112,347.50
- Suburban Maintenance - \$104,322.50
- Ohio West Virginia Excavating - \$83,750.00

Ohio West Virginia was awarded the bid. Work is expected to start

Ohio County Engineer Magazine

As was mentioned in Fred's article, a concrete truck fell through the posted bridge on County Road 4 Sand Hill. A photograph was used for this cover of the Ohio County Engineer magazine in August of 1978.

