

# County Update

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## *Fred's Desk*



### FINAL DECADE

#### 2006-2016

During the last 11 years as Belmont County Engineer, we had only one federally declared disaster, but did have several periods of small flooding and one severe windstorm. We also saw the start of the oil and gas drilling boom.

**2006** saw the repair of flood damage from 2004 & 2005. A lot of the work was performed by both our road and bridge crews and by bid contracts. During the year, 11 projects, in the amount of \$2.9 million, were bid and constructed by private contractors. We only had about 24" of snowfall during the 2005-06 winter.

In **2007** we also had a mild winter, with about half of our annual snowfall. During April, we had 17 straight days of rainfall, causing some flooding and landslides. We spent most of the year continuing the repair of damage caused by the 2004-05 flooding. Another \$2.4 million in projects were bid for construction.

In **2008**, we completed the final project repairing damage from the 2004-05 flooding. Our bridge crew was able to return to building bridges, and built 8 new ones during the year. In December, for the first time, we started an afternoon shift for the winter months, with three highway workers and one supervisor on duty from 3:30 P.M. to midnight to take care of small snowfalls and icy spots.

**2009** saw the construction of 11 new bridges built by our crews and 3 more by contract. We also had another \$2.2 million in construction projects during the year, including a new 128' two span bridge in Maynard, and a 450' long steel piling retaining wall on Colerain Pike. I was also honored by the County Engineer's Association of Ohio as "County Engineer of the Year".

**2010** began with over 1 foot of snow on the ground. Then, after a January thaw, on Feb. 6th, we had a 16" snowfall followed by 2" to 4" of snowfall each day for the next 10 days. This was then followed by another storm dropping another 13" of snow. This was an all-time record of snowfall for the month of February. We then had no snow in March. On June 4 & 5, we had 4" to 8" of rainfall, causing more flooding which washed out two of our bridges.....continued on page 2

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Then on August 4, we had 70 mph straight line wind which closed down completely or to one lane on 40 of our county highways. We also had another 14 bridges constructed during the year, and a 42" gas line was being constructed in the southwest part of the county. In September, the first county fair was held at the new fairgrounds on Roscoe road.

**2011** saw the start of the oil and gas boom in Belmont County. The Road Use Maintenance Agreement (RUMA) was created, and a few of our county highways were upgraded and resurfaced at the expense of the oil and gas industry. Heavy rainfall in April and May caused 13 major roadway slips, and once again a federal disaster was declared. Another 14 bridges were constructed during the year.

**2012** saw a mild winter, where we spent about half the money we did the previous two winters. Our sign man and helper erected 2380 new high density signs and 1300 sign posts paid for by a \$60,000 grant from the Federal Highway Administration. Our road crew worked on damage caused by last year's rainfall, and the bridge crew built another 10 bridges. Several new well sites were built in the county and drilling of the wells began.

**2013** began with a lot of snow. The oil and gas industry got busier, and upgraded and paved about 5 miles of our roads. The Commissioners provided about \$1 million and we resurfaced another 13 miles of highways. We also built 8 bridges, bid one large bridge and had two bridges built by oil and gas, for a total of 11 new bridges.

**2014** started with potholes everywhere. Oil & Gas upgraded and paved another 14 miles and OPWC provided funds to resurface another 4 miles. We also built another 11 bridges, 9 by our crews and 2 by contract. ODOT announced they will build 10 new county bridges over the next few years at no cost to the county. On August 1st, Terry Lively was hired as Deputy County Engineer.

**2015** started very mild, but in February, it was very cold and the ground was snow covered all month. Again, in March we had a lot of potholes everywhere. 2015 was a record year as 57 miles of resurfacing of county highways was completed. The commissioners provided about \$2 million for resurfacing about 23 miles, and another 34 miles was funded by oil & gas. The Belmont Transportation Improvement District (TID) built the first phase of a new highway which begins on US 40 and run southwest to the west side of the Ohio Valley Plaza. The second and final phase will be bid by ODOT on Dec. 1, 2016, and will continue south across I-70, run along the south and west side of the Ohio Valley Mall and end at the intersection of Mall and Banfield Roads. This will open up a lot of land for development.

**2016** saw a slowdown in the oil & gas industry, but once fall arrived, it begin to pick-up somewhat. So far this year, they have resurfaced about 15 miles of county highways, with more scheduled for next spring. We have bid \$565,000 in projects this year. ODOT has also built this year 6 of the 10 bridges programmed in 2014. The remaining 4 are under contract and will be built next spring.

This is the final of 4 articles of the history of 4 decades as your County Engineer. Hope you enjoyed them.

## *Boating*

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What, no champagne for the launch?



Let's go waterskiing!

Boating is usually viewed as a leisure activity but recently a boat was used to help one of our crews complete a project.

The bridge crew was replacing the 3”X5” wood decking on a 130 foot long bridge located over the shallow backwaters of Piedmont Lake. The work required that one or two people be working under the bridge as the new decking was being installed but the water was too deep to be able to wade.

One of the crew members offered the use of his 12 foot long jon boat to help with the work. Small platforms were built and secured to the boat gunwales which enabled two people to work tethered under the deck in a safe and secure manner.



Winter inspection for all equipment used for snow and ice control took place on October 12th. The Road Supervisors and the Safety Committee worked together to insure that each vehicle would be able to be operated in a safe manner in the upcoming months.