

County Update

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Fred's Desk



NEW YEAR'S EVE will be my last day as Belmont County Engineer, after serving in that position for 40 ½ years. After graduating from college in August of 1959, with a degree in Civil Engineering, I began my long career working for the Illinois Highway Department for five years. I then returned home to Belmont County, working 10 years for the Ohio Department of Transportation.

In 1974, I left ODOT and started my own private business of engineering and surveying. In September, 1975, I was hired by then County Engineer Richard Boccabella as his deputy, and upon his retirement on June 30, 1976, I became the county engineer. After more than 57 years in this profession, it's now time to retire.

I have seen many changes since I became county engineer. When I started, we didn't have computers, cell phones, fax machines, pagers or even air conditioning in the courthouse. The County Recorder's office had the only Xerox copier in the courthouse, which we could use if necessary. We sent and received a lot of letters by mail, but today with E-mail, very little mail is sent by or received by the US Postal service.

When you work for so many years, you are in contact with a lot of people. Through the years, I have worked with several hundred employees, too many to count. They were all very dedicated employees, and a pleasure to work with. I will be leaving a staff of about 40 hardworking, experienced and dedicated men and women to carry on our mission.

Here at the courthouse, I have worked with 15 different County Commissioners, 3 Auditors, 6 Prosecutors, 6 Sheriffs, 3 Recorders, 3 Clerks of Court, 4 Treasurers and many Common Pleas, Probate and County Judges, all of whom I had a great working relationship.

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All of the County Engineer's Offices and Garages will be closed on December 23rd, December 26th, 2016 and January 2nd, 2017.

Fred F. Bennett, P.E., P.S.

On November 11th, 2016 a party was held at the Belmont County Fairgrounds Wise Building to honor Fred for his years of service to Belmont County.

Nearly 200 people from throughout the State of Ohio were in attendance for the event.

Pastor Wesley Howser gave the invocation and pledge to the flag, then a fine meal prepared by the 40 Sports Grill was enjoyed by all.

A parade of people came forward to give testimonials about Fred. These were highlighted by an emotional speech by Shereza O'Hara, Terry Lively telling "The Story of Fred", a presentation by Fred and Judy's grandchildren and finally some stories by Karen, Kirk and Keith, Fred and Judy's children.

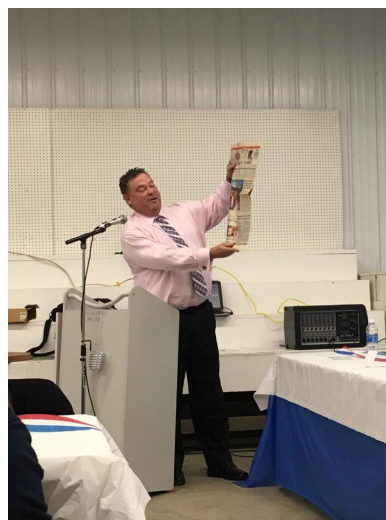
The insert in this newsletter contain just a few pictures from the evening.



Fred literally passed the torch to Terry.

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As part of my job, I have met and worked with thousands of others. I have worked closely with engineers and staff from the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC), Bel-O-Mar Regional Planning, Buckeye Hills, County Engineer's Association of Ohio (CEAO) and Ohio's 87 other County Engineers. Also, the Belmont County Community Improvement Corporation (CIC), Belmont County TID, many Trustees and Fiscal Officers from our 16 townships, Mayors and staff from all of our municipalities, various contractors, suppliers of equipment and materials, and many of the good of citizens Belmont County. I'm sure I missed mentioning others. It has been my honor and privilege to have worked with all of you.



Since the county engineer is an elected position, you often get to meet people in high positions. Through the years, I've had the honor to meet President Jimmy Carter, First Lady Barbara Bush, former First Lady and presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, Senators John Glenn and Howard Metzenbaum. Also, over the past 40 years I've met most Governors, several congressmen and several state legislators.

On January 2nd, Terry Lively, P.S., P.E. will become the new Belmont County Engineer. Terry has been my Deputy Engineer since August, 2014, and I know he will do a great job as your county engineer. I'm leaving him with a great staff who will continue to keep our roads and bridges safe for people who travel our highways.

I've been blessed to have such a long career, and so many of you in my life. God bless all of you, your families and loved ones, and have a "Merry Christmas" and a "Happy New Year".



Fred was the recipient of the County Engineer's Associations Lifetime Achievement Award at the CEAO Winter Conference which was held in Columbus, Ohio on December 5th and 6th.