

Ditch Clean Out Principals on County Roads

One of the most common requests to the Road Department is to have a road ditch cleaned out of dirt that has silted into the ditch over time. With the hilly ground in Fayette County and with erosion control practices from past eras that often allowed considerable erosion from farm fields, there is certainly a need to have ditches cleaned out.

- Fayette County has 2,300 miles of road ditch. To put this in perspective, placed end to end, this would take a traveler from Fayette County, nearly all the way to Orlando Florida..... and back again.
- If the Road Department put 100% of its funding into cleaning out road ditches, I do not believe we would be able to meet all of the requests. Since Roads and Bridges have been significantly underfunded for 40 years in the U.S., there are huge needs in many, many areas of the County's road system.
- Many of the cleanout requests ask for the dirt to be placed back in fields in areas that have eroded, low areas, or spread to increase the topsoil. Often the requests would benefit only one or two landowners while having minimal benefit to the traveling public.
- The Road Department is funded primarily by the Gas Tax and to a lesser extent property tax. Tax payers should be able to reasonably expect that the taxes they pay for the roads go to high priority maintenance and construction that will make travel safer and more efficient.

The following are principals intended to guide the Road Department so that we can be the best stewards of the limited funds entrusted to us, while treating requests for cleanouts fairly.

- There must be a road purpose for the work. The road department cannot expend public funds to function as a construction contractor for private individuals gain.
- Requests compete for limited resources (labor, equipment, time, funding) against all of the other substantial, urgent, and important needs on the system.
- Priority is not on a first come first serve basis. The road department keeps a data base of all requests. When the department is working on a priority project in an area, and there is a need for dirt, these projects will be chosen. Projects may also be chosen in areas where we have already mobilized for a priority project and where the cleanout has a good road benefit. (By not jumping from project to project to project, we decrease mobilization time and are able to get much more work done.)

All of us in the Road Department understand that these projects are important to you and the frustration of waiting many years for a cleanout to happen. We have recently created a work in the Right of Way Permit to allow residents to complete the work themselves. The permit is free, available on the county website, and only takes a few minutes to fill out.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and understand our resource limitations.

Sincerely,



Joel D. Fantz, P.E.
Fayette County Engineer