

## **TRAFFIC AND SAFETY INFORMATIONAL SERIES FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION #23**

### **How does the county make decisions about paving gravel roadways?**

You may wonder why some gravel roads get paved and why some remain gravel. County engineers follow a plan and consider many factors when deciding which roadways to pave and which to maintain as gravel roadways.

#### **The assessment and decision plan**

Because no county can afford to pave every gravel roadway, the county must form and follow a plan for how to evaluate and take care of its roadways. This plan, often called a “roadway management system,” allows a county to assess the condition of its roadways and make efficient financial decisions about roadway improvements. The following steps are typically included in a roadway management system:

1. Make an inventory of the number and mileage of county roadways.
2. Assess the condition of the roadways.
3. Decide the best method of repairing problem areas.
4. Establish long-range goals and objectives.
5. Establish priorities: (a) use preventive maintenance to keep roadways in proper shape and (b) reconstruct roadways in very poor condition.

Using a roadway management system allows a county to spend its limited funds more wisely by determining the most cost-effective and long-term improvements and maintenance for their roads.

#### **Factors that determine when to pave**

When determining whether to pave and when, counties consider many factors. These factors may include the following:

- Roadway type.
- How many vehicles drive on the road per day. A gravel roadway weakens as more traffic uses it. Typically, the paving of a particular roadway is more likely to be justified as average daily traffic volume increases.
- The type of traffic that uses the road. The type and weight of vehicles on a gravel roadway also influence its overall useful life. The heavier the vehicles, the shorter the life, making paving more justified.

These and other factors go into every difficult decision of whether to maintain a gravel roadways as is or whether to pave it.

#### **Keeping gravel roads in good repair**

Many problems with gravel roads can be remedied with methods other than paving. For example, for loss of gravel from the road, a motorgrader could be used to remix the gravel or dust-control materials could be applied. These and other methods may be used to keeping the gravel roads in your area in good repair.

#### **For more information**

For more information, please contact \_\_\_\_\_.