



Shake Your Mailbox Day

The Roscommon County Road Commission received a CRAMmy Award at the 2009 Annual Highway Conference for their unique idea to set aside a day encouraging county residents to “shake their mailbox” to ensure the receptacle and post could withstand winter maintenance operations.

Record snow falls in recent winters have led to an increase in the number of mailboxes damaged by heavy snow thrown from passing plows. Many of these mailboxes have become loose or in need of repair over years of use. Damage to these posts and receptacles could have been prevented by proper routine maintenance.

A damaged mailbox is not only an inconvenience to the homeowner, these preventable damages cause negative public relations for road agencies often accused of hitting the mailboxes with the snow plow.

The Public Relations-Educations Committee (PR-EC) decided to take this idea statewide. Public education campaigns remind residents to check smoke detector batteries as the clocks change for daylight savings time. The PR-EC encourages road commissions to participate in this event to raise awareness of the need to prepare mailboxes for old man winter.

At the request of CRAM, Governor Granholm has proclaimed October 24, 2009 as *Shake Your Mailbox Day* in Michigan.

Shake Your Mailbox Day has become a joint effort on the part of county road commissions and the United States Postal Service (U.S.P.S.). Road Commissions will receive a special edition of CRAM’s PR Tips which will include a sample

press release, fact sheet and flyer to use in communicating with residents and the media.

Of course, every community will have some who are elderly, disabled or for some other reason are unable to shake their mailboxes. Road Commissions are encouraged to work with local service organizations and the Area Agency on Aging to find community groups willing to join in and help their neighbors.

Shake Your Mailbox Day also provides road commissions the opportunity to educate residents on the dangers of placing mailboxes in the right of way that exceed safe guidelines.

Each year, 70 to 100 people are killed in accidents involving rural mailboxes. Many others are permanently injured because mailboxes and their supports penetrate the windshield.

Although steel tractor wheels, milk cans filled with concrete, bricks and other items are artistic, they present a serious roadside hazard to motorists and a liability risk for homeowners. The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) warns “private individuals and corporation, as well as governmental entities, may be liable for their roles in creating or maintaining highway hazards.

The PR-EC encourages road commissions to utilize this opportunity for pro-active community relations.

What about your road commission? Have you implemented proactive or reactive strategies to improve your road commission’s public relations? A call for nominations will be issued shortly for the 2009 CRAMmy Awards.



Political Action Committee

RUSH-PAC GOLF OUTING

NORTHERN MICHIGAN GOLF OUTING - SEPTEMBER 8

The RUSH-PAC golf outings have come to a close this year, but the battle in Lansing for road funding has not.

Thank you to all who have participated in the golf outings that have brought in over \$25,000!

The last golf outing of the year, Tuesday, September 8, at the Black Bear Golf Resort in Vanderbilt, was so much fun and a huge success. The day was unseasonably warm with all of the golfers enjoying the warmth of the sun! Kudos goes to Don Spray who spends so much time putting this event together. And thank you to Brian Gutowski who assisted this year.



1st Place Team - Mark Jahnke & Paul Aubin, Speciality Claims Services (Sponsor!); and Michael Kluck, Michael R. Kluck & Associates (Sponsor!); and Tim Haagsma, Kent.



We would also like to thank John Hunt for donating his \$107 winnings back to RUSH-PAC.



"You cannot escape the responsibilities of tomorrow by evading them today."

-- Anonymous

JOB OPENING

The Muskegon County Road Commission is seeking qualified applicants for the administrative and professional position of Assistant County Highway Engineer. This highly responsible position assists in the planning, supervision and directing of the engineering department operations and activities. The person in this position has responsibility and involvement in a wide variety of engineering matters. Work involves the exercise of independent judgment and discretion in the interpretation, application and enforcement of engineering principles and practices, laws, regulations and policies relating to County programs, and the supervision of a number of professional, technical and other assistants or employees.

Applicants for this position must have a comprehensive knowledge of the principles and practices of civil engineering; knowledge of the highway system of the County and controlling laws; comprehensive knowledge of modern methods and techniques of highway construction and maintenance; knowledge of the principles of drainage, hydraulics, hydrology, and soils; must have ability to communicate in writing and orally; the ability direct the work of professional and subprofessional employees; ability to plan, organize and direct large and small scale engineering programs; ability to institute and direct construction planning and research for the advancement of work and personnel standards; ability to coordinate and integrate the work of the various department; and be in good physical condition.

The qualified applicant must also have extensive, progressively responsible engineering and administrative experience in planning, constructing and maintaining highways, bridges and related structures and Bachelors of Science Degree in Civil Engineering from an ABET accredited university. Salary Range \$44,303 - \$56,493 and a pension plan consisting of a defined contribution plan.

A comprehensive job description may be obtained at the offices of the Road Commission at 7700 East Apple Avenue, Muskegon, Michigan 49442 between the hours of 8:00 A.M. and 4:30 P.M.

Applicants for this position should mail their resumes to Ms. Joyce A. Whisenant, Director of Finance and Human Resources, 7700 East Apple Avenue, Muskegon, Michigan 49442. All resumes must be in the office of the Road Commission no later than the close of business on October 30, 2009 to be eligible for consideration. Envelopes should be marked as "ASSISTANT COUNTY HIGHWAY ENGINEER".

2009 DIRECTORY CHANGES

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Add: **Abraham & Gaffney, P.C.**, 3511 Coolidge Rd., Ste. 100, East Lansing MI 48823,
Ph. 517.351.6836

D + K Truck Company, 319 East North St., Lansing MI 48906, ph. 517.484.1905

JFNew, 11181 Marwill Ave., West Olive MI 49460, ph. 616.847.1680

Kessler Equipment Company, 5180 Mower Rd., Saginaw MI 48601, ph. 989.777.3269

Lakeshore Signs and Safety Equipment, 7005 152nd Ave., West Olive MI 49460
Ph. 616.566.0077

Meekhof Tire Sales and Service, 1640 Olson, Grand Rapids MI 49503, ph. 616.458.7667

Michigan Kenworth, 7393 Expressway Ct. SW, Grand Rapids MI 49548,
ph: 616.281.8610

Michigan State Seed, 717 N. Clinton, Grand Ledge MI 48837, ph. 517.627.2164

Raymond James & Assoc., 15 Kercheval Ave., Grosse Pointe Farms MI 48236
Ph. 313.640.7632

Reinstate: **Diesel Truck Sales Inc.**, P.O. Box 1428, Saginaw MI 48605, ph. 989.753.4481

Change: **Component Technology** becomes **Certified Power Inc.**

AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS

NMARC Pres. Donald J. Spray, Cheboygan; VP Mary N. Gillis, Grand Traverse;
ST Shannon M. Evans, Benzie

MANAGING YOUR MESSAGE IN TODAY'S MEDIA

It is a bright beautiful day right up to the time your phone rings and you are alerted that one of your vehicles has just struck a utility pole and knocked out power to the downtown area, including an elementary school and a hospital. A short time later you learn that a citizen has posted video on their blog that indicates the driver had been using their cell phone when the accident occurred and that the video has had 200 views and is spreading... What do you do?



Thirty employees from eighteen road commissions had a chance to practice this scenario firsthand at the 2009 Public Relations Workshop.

Is your road commission/office prepared to deal with such a situation? It is undoubtedly good practice to have emergency response plans in place, but do your existing plans address the phenomenon of social media?

Attendees learned about sites like Twitter, Facebook, Youtube, and Myspace. They also learned valuable techniques for using these sites to improve their public image.

We extend our appreciation to our presenter Bill Nowling for sharing his insight on the subject. We also appreciate the hospitality of our host, the Roscommon County Road Commission.

We hope to see you at the 2010 Public Relations Workshop.

SOME SOCIAL MEDIA FACTS

The rise of social media has been unparalleled in its effect on business and government alike. More and more people are relying on information shared through posts by their friends.

Some interesting notes on social media include:

- * Social media has overtaken porn as the number one activity on the internet.
- * If Facebook were a country, it would be the world's fourth largest between the US and Indonesia
- * It took radio 38 years to reach 50 million users, TV took 13 years, the internet took 4 years; ipod took 3 years...Facebook added more than 100 million users in less than 9 months
- * There are more than 200,000,000 active blogs
- * One in eight couples married in the US last year met online
- * By 2010, Generation Y will outnumber Baby Boomers...96% of Generation Y have joined a social network

SOME SOCIAL MEDIA DOS AND DON'TS

By now you are probably used to being abused by angry citizens...but social media opens a whole new avenue of attack. The good news is that by proactively using social media, you can extinguish the fire before it becomes an issue.

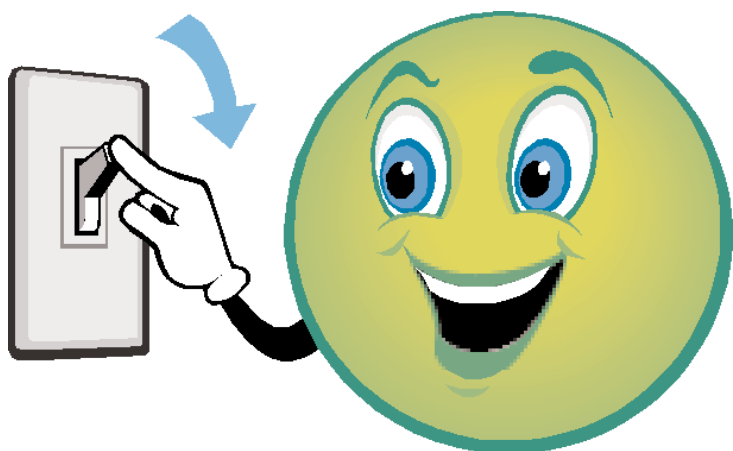
- * If you find yourself or your office in the line of fire on a blog or other media there are some things you can do to help save or regain your image.
- * Correct errors of fact
- * Only respond when your core mission is amplified or assaulted
- * Use Social media to pivot negative events into positive outcomes
- * Do Not argue with bloggers
- * Answer the questions you wish you had been asked without restating the question

MANY PEOPLE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT IT TAKES SIGNIFICANTLY MORE ELECTRICITY TO TURN ON A FLUORESCENT LAMP THAN TO OPERATE THE LAMP FOR LONG PERIODS.



Researchers at the U.S. Naval Civil Engineering Laboratory have found that a fluorescent lamp's initial "start surge" lasts only 1/120 of a second. The entire starting current for two-tube rapid-start luminaries lasts less than one second before it stabilizes. *Consequently, Navy engineers assert that turning the lamps off for only one second saves the energy required to turn them back on.*

MODERN FLUORESCENT LAMPS, HOWEVER, USE LITTLE STARTING ENERGY. TURNING THEM OFF ACTUALLY HELPS THEM LAST LONGER AND LOWERS LIGHTING ENERGY COSTS.



According to the Electric Power Research Institute, not only does turning off fluorescent lights reduce lamp replacement costs, it also reduces electric bills. For example, turning off an F40 fluorescent lamp for only one-half hour a day can save about \$4.00 (based on 8 cents/kWh) in energy over the life of the lamp. In fact, the money saved by this routine is typically more than the price of a new lamp.

IN SHORT, YOU SHOULD TURN OFF LIGHTS IN YOUR OFFICE OR A ROOM IN YOUR HOME WHEN YOU LEAVE, EVEN IF YOU LEAVE FOR ONLY A FEW MINUTES.

Leaving lights on unnecessarily for just one hour a day increases electricity costs by 5 to 10 percent per month. For example: let's say you have a room with two banks of 3 light fixtures. Each fixture has two 40-Watt fluorescent bulbs. In one hour, you're using 480 Watt-hours or 0.48 kilowatt-hours (kWh). On the other hand, if those lights are turned off just two hours a day, you will save almost 1 kWh and keep almost 1.6 pounds of carbon dioxide out of the air.

----Texas Department of Energy

FOUR YEARS OF SHARING - LISTSERVS SHINE LIGHT ON YOUR ISSUES

Ever feel like you are charting new territory? A quick post to the ListServ may help. Since the launch in August 2005, the ListSers have facilitated the exchange of information between road commissions.

Recent ListServ topics include: subdivision speed controls (Engineering); GASB 45 Requirements (Finance & Human Resources); and many more. It is not uncommon to have several responses within an hour of posting your request.

Each List has its own management page (listed below) where you can reset your password, modify subscription features or otherwise manage your account. User options include the ability to choose to receive daily digests of posts rather than each post, opt out of receiving copies of messages they post, and filter duplicate messages when their address is also in the To:, CC:, or Bcc: lines. Many of the options available on the management pages can be set globally. This means that you can modify the subscription characteristics for more than one list at a time.

Users can also put the Lists on vacation mode. Simply visit the list administrative page and disable mail delivery. While this option is set, mail will not be delivered to your address. You MUST enable mail on your return, if you wish to resume getting ListServ postings.

To subscribe to one or more of the ListSers simply visit the management page for each List you are interested in. Available ListSers and their links can be found below.

AVAILABLE LISTSERVS

CRAM-Commissioners is restricted to active commissioners, managers, and board clerks.

<http://bsd02.samsa.com/mailman/listinfo/cram-commissioners>

CRAM-Engineering is targeted to engineering-related staff members.

<http://bsd02.samsa.com/mailman/listinfo/cram-engineering>

CRAM-Finance-HR is targeted to finance and human resource staff.

<http://bsd02.samsa.com/mailman/listinfo/cram-finance-hr>

CRAM-Negotiating-Trunkline serves counties with state trunkline maintenance contracts

<http://bsd02.samsa.com/mailman/listinfo/cram-negotiating-trunkline>

CRAM-PR is an open list used to foster public relations. This list also receives copies of press releases and other items released to the public by CRAM.

<http://bsd02.samsa.com/mailman/listinfo/cram-pr>

CRAM-Purchasing is intended to allow road commissions to collaborate on purchases and share information related to purchasing experiences.

<http://bsd02.samsa.com/mailman/listinfo/cram-purchasing>

CRAM-Tech is an open access list intended to help with general technology based questions

<http://bsd02.samsa.com/mailman/listinfo/cram-tech>

CRAM-Precision-Users-Self-Help offers a forum for users of Precision Computer Systems software

<http://bsd02.samsa.com/mailman/listinfo/cram-precision-users-self-help>

CRAM-Cogitate-Users-Self-Help offers a forum for users of Cogitate software

<http://bsd02.samsa.com/mailman/listinfo/cram-cogitate-users-self-help>

Passwords from the old ListServ platform do not work for the new List Archives and equally, new passwords do not work for the old List Archives. You may change your password in the new platform so that it matches your old password, or you can generate a new one altogether. To change passwords in the new system, simply log on to the management page - enter a new password and confirm it - check "Change globally." if you wish to set the password for all lists. To change a password for the old ListServ platform/archives, log into www.localroads.net and click the "Change your password" link under user options.

About the first of each month (unless you opt out at the management page) you will get a password reminder from mailman-owner@bsd02.samsa.com with your user information and passwords. You will likely want to add this address to your safe list and watch for it. The message was last sent on October 1 and should reappear on November 1.



ListServ Tips/Rules



If you are a ListServ subscriber, you've probably noticed an increase in the number of e-mails forwarded by the CRAM Office. The new platform actively enforces the following rules:

Do not include attachments with posts. If you have an item to include with your post, contact Tom at the CRAM Office for assistance.

Do not use HTML or Rich Text Format for posting messages.

Do not include stationery/background of any kind.

Messages that do not follow these rules may be rejected by the ListServ.

Is your mailbox strong enough to survive the winter?



On “Shake Your Mailbox Day”, please give your mailbox an aggressive shaking and a thorough inspection. More often than not, damage to mailboxes is caused by snow pushing against weakened posts or hardware. If you can shake your mailbox, it probably needs maintenance. Take time now to make any repairs needed so your mailbox will be strong enough to survive the winter. Proper maintenance may help to prevent damage that results in delayed mail delivery, or worse, having to make alternate delivery arrangements.

Did you know:

- * Roadside mailboxes are in the road right of way, and are allowed by road commissions as a convenience to you. Check with your road commission and the US Postal Service for rules and requirements with respect to the construction and placement of your mailbox.
- * Flying snow makes it look like snow plow trucks are traveling much faster than they are, but the average speed of travel is about 25 m.p.h. Even at this speed, the force of the snow being pushed off the road can damage mailboxes and other roadside items.
- * Mailbox replacement policies vary from county to county. If your mailbox is damaged by winter maintenance operations, contact your road commission. Should the need arise, your local post office may provide suggestions for temporary mailbox placement or alternate delivery options.

We encourage you to ***Shake Your Mailbox*** on October 24, 2009



Shake Your Mailbox Day is a joint effort on the part of your county road commission and the United States Postal Service (U.S.P.S.).



THE ROAD AHEAD



October

- 19 Seven County Council
Cleary's Pub and Restaurant, Howell
- 22 Blue Water Highway Council
Liberty Lanes, Sandusky
- 22 Vacationland Council
White Pines Resort, Spruce

November

- 2 Southeastern Council
TBA
- 3 37th Senatorial District Council
Audie's Restaurant, Mackinaw City
- 9 Southwestern Council
TBA
- 19 Paul Bunyan Council
TBA

December

- 7-9 ASMRC Annual Conference
Bavarian Inn Lodge, Frankenmuth



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ADEQUATE FUNDING
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**REMIND YOUR LEGISLATORS
THAT YOUR FAMILY'S SAFETY IS
RIDING ON THEIR COMMITMENT
TO MICHIGAN'S ROADS.**

TRANSPORTATION ASSET MANAGEMENT WORKSHOPS AVAILABLE

Registrations are now being taken for three Fall sessions of the Michigan Transportation Asset Management Workshop for LTAP.

- Oct. 26, 2009 Horizon's Conference Center, Saginaw
- Nov. 10, 2009 University Center, Gaylord
- Nov. 11, 2009 Holiday Inn, Marquette



Complete information can be found at the following link:
http://michiganltap.org/workshop/2009_tam_workshop_2.html
 Register by email: ltap@mtu.edu or call LTAP @ 906.487.2102.