

HELPING CITIZENS WITH COMPLAINTS are Pauline Tedder, left, and Fred Rudd of the Oakland County Road Commission's Office of Public Assistance. Calls coming into the OPA hotline — 858-4804 — are systematically handled with maintenance, traffic, permits or other departments. Reports help the Road Commission prepare annual and special programs, also.

Rough Roads On Decrease

There was some good news and some bad news in the year-end report of the Oakland County Road Commission's Office of Public Assistance (OPA), said Michael Richardson, Road Commission Secretary-Clerk.

First the good news (something that's rarely heard by a public works agency). The number of citizen complaints received about holes and rough roads actually decreased in 1976 from the previous year's tally.

Now the bad news (inevitable). Complaints about ice and snow, and about trees and brush, increased dramatically.

The "Big Ice Storm" of March 1976 was largely responsible for the bad news. Another factor was that telephone books for the first time listed "Complaints" along with "Office of Public Assistance." That number is 858-4804.

The total number of complaints for all reasons, from ice damage to wood chip locations, totaled 6,710—up 1,224 from 1975.

Fully 25 percent of all complaints were the 1,710 from Waterford Township. Another 16 percent came from West Bloomfield Township, where 1,070 calls were prompted. West Bloomfield was the most vocal on a per capita basis, as total calls from there equalled one for every 27 persons. The large number of unimproved subdivision streets in Waterford and West Bloomfield account for a great number of complaint calls.

Ranking third in total calls, with 412, or about six percent of the total, was Avon Township. Fourth with 383 was Bloomfield Township, followed by White Lake Township with 362.

Snow Removal Costly

Why is it sometimes a couple of days before Road Commission snowplows get to your subdivision street? The answer is: cost.

The 115 pieces of snowplowing equipment are deployed for any given snowstorms on the basis of traffic volume priorities, but only those routes with more than 5,000 vehicles of travel daily or designated

Oakland County Road Commission road maintenance activities during 1976 were considerable.

About six miles of two-lane road could have been paved with the 6,865 tons of asphalt used for chuckholes repairs, said William "Bert" Mercer, Maintenance Director.

The 12,977 miles of road grading was the equivalent of more than half-way around the world of more than 11 times the 1,125 miles of county gravel roads.



A SPECIAL ROAD GRAVELLING PROGRAM places three inches of gravel on 282.6 miles of Oakland County Roads. The \$1.3 million program is funded 40 per cent by the Board of Oakland County Road Commissioners, 40 per cent by participating townships and 20 per cent by the Board of Oakland County Commissioners.

Maintenance Accelerated

Responding to motorists' complaints that identified severe problem areas, the Board of Oakland County Road Commissioners adopted a \$230,000 special accelerated maintenance program for 1977, said Commissioner Fred D. Houghten.

This program required hiring of 23 employees for a 15-week period. The work began July 25 and is scheduled for completion by mid-November.

"The program will provide a higher degree of maintenance than could be done under our regular budget, such as providing asphalt overlays in some pothole areas where spot patching is no longer feasible," said Paul Van Roekel, Road Commission Highway Engineer. "The program can't correct all deficiencies to specified roads, but will help provide for some improvement of low shoulders and base repair where potholes are especially bad.

Primary roads with problem areas that are receiving extra maintenance

county primary and local paved roads, such as school access routes, are plowed on overtime, said John L. Grubba, Managing Director.

Plowing is usually started when snow begins accumulating to depths of three or more inches, for which the Road Commission usually has advance notice from the General Weather Center.

Gravel roads and shoulders received 85,000 tons of gravel, or enough to place a three-inch depth on 56.95 miles of roadway. (A 1977 special road graveling program will place three inches of gravel on 282.6 miles, which will require 437,000 tons of gravel at an estimated cost of \$1,300,000. Costs will be shared 40 percent by the Road Commission, 40 percent by participating townships, and 20 percent by the Board of County Commissioners.)

Litter was swept up along 1,562

curb miles, which would be like cleaning along the width of 100,000 average home lots. Litter pickup required 2,162 manhours, which is equal to one man working more than eight hours every working day of the year.

Dust control measures required four million gallons of liquid chloride.

Crews mowed the equivalent of 1,428 football fields, removed 130 dead trees, and cleaned 28 miles of ditches.

Winter Snows Light, Slick

Oakland County Road Commission crews used 44,000 tons of salt to keep the roads open during the winter of 1976-77. That's enough salt to fill 1.4 billion one-ounce salt shakers, or more than 150 pounds for each privately owned passenger vehicle registered in the county.

That's also the most salt used by the Road Commission since the winter of 1966-67 (ten years earlier) which recorded particularly heavy snowfalls.

Snowfall depth wasn't the big problem last winter. In fact, total snowfall was only 45 inches between the first requiring snow operations November 7 and the last March 22. The heaviest snowfall was seven inches January 9 and 10.

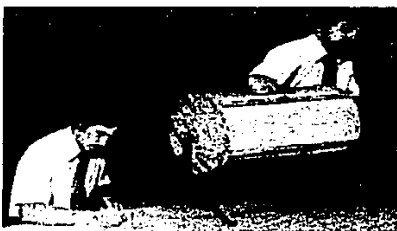
But light snowfalls of 60 measurable storms spread over long periods of time required the use of salt rather than plows to keep roads open and safe, said John R. Gnau, Jr., Chairman of the Board of Oakland County Road Commissioners.

The amount of salt necessary was greater than usual also because of extremely low temperatures, which diminished effectiveness of salt by as much as 75 percent. December temperatures averaged seven degrees below normal and January temperatures averaged 12 degrees below normal.

Salt Cutbacks Still Our Goal

Last winter's conditions requiring an unusually large amount of salt for safety, haven't sidetracked the Oakland County Road Commission's commitment to reducing salt usage for cost savings and environmental protection, said John R. Gnau, Jr., Chairman of the Board of Oakland County Road Commissioners.

All salt-spreading trucks have been equipped with in-cab controls that regulate the amount of salt applied according to weather conditions. In the past, the trucks either spread salt or they didn't, with only the angle of the truck bed and the driver's judgment as a guide to amount.



DRAWING FOR SPECIAL ACCELERATED MAINTENANCE PROGRAM EMPLOYEES. Gregg Almas, assistant personnel manager; and Jerry Fair of the Michigan Employment Security Commission, draw names of 23 persons who applied for a 15-week work program to provide accelerated maintenance on Oakland County Roads.