

Pothole time on roads

Oakland crews will repair 172 per mile

If the number of potholes on Oakland County roads becomes too mind-boggling, here's an easy number to remember:

172 per mile.
"Some portions of the road system are likely to have far more than average, because 54 miles will have few or none," said John L. Grubba, managing director of the Oakland County Road Commission.

Oakland County crews will fan out this spring across more than 1,500 miles of roads — 251 miles of state highways and 1,253 miles of county paved roads.

Their pothole-patching job will consume 7.8 million pounds of patching material.

The 260,000 potholes they expect to find will eat an average of 30 pounds of patching material apiece.

"Potholes are the result of water running into cracks, freezing and expanding to break the pavement edges," Grubba said.

COST OF the job is expected to be \$940,000 for the fiscal year which began last Oct. 1. That breaks down to:

- \$169,000 for patching material.
- \$343,000 for labor — 27,000 person-hours or the equivalent of one person working full-time for 13 years.
- \$428,000 for equipment.

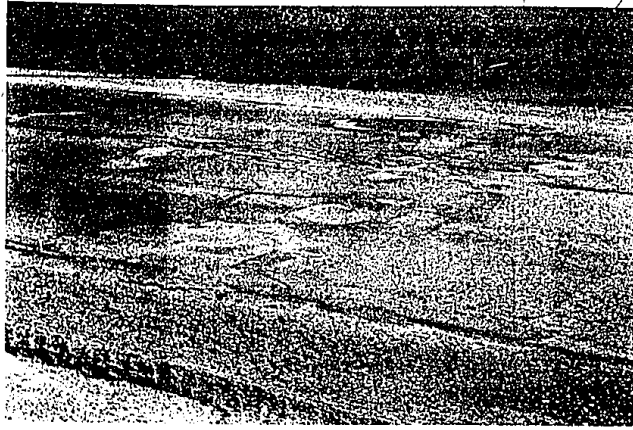
Different kinds of patching material are used, depending on the season. In summer road crews use heated, plant-mix asphalt — the same as is used in paving.

In spring and winter, they use asphalt mixed with a space-age emulsion which provides a strong bond, even in cold weather. "The emulsified asphalt is about 66 percent more costly, but patches with it last 300 to 400 percent longer," Grubba said.

MOST POTHOLES are patched during routine rounds, but the Road Commission will send a crew to repair a single pothole if it's likely to be a safety hazard.

A candidate for an emergency response is a pothole 12 inches across and 2 inches deep — particularly if it's sharp edged. "Citizens can help us by calling our department of citizen services at 858-4804 when they know of potholes this large or larger," Grubba said.

Only in recent years has the Road Commission had to be concerned about potholes 2 inches deep. The previous standard was 3 inches. The reason for the change: the trend to smaller, lighter autos, which are more easily damaged by a deeper pothole.



Potholes are caused when water runs into pavement edges. Each hole takes an average of 30 pounds of patching material.

Truck weight limits in effect in Oakland

Truckers are required by state law to reduce their loads on many Oakland County roads until further notice.

Weight restrictions will minimize road breakup during thawing time — usually four to six weeks, said John L. Grubba, managing director of the Oakland County Road Commission.

"Road pavements are particularly vulnerable during the early stages of frost-out," he said. "Upper levels thaw first but can't dry sufficiently to restabilize the base until drainage

is possible through unfrozen lower levels.

"Basically truck loads must be reduced to 75 percent of normal on Class A roads which are not specifically designated all-weather," he said. Class A roads, in general, are concrete and some asphalt-paved roads serving as main routes be-

tween communities.

Loads must be reduced to 65 percent of normal on Class B roads — all others.

"Most truck operators are familiar with the requirements," said Grubba, adding that maps and other information may be obtained from the traffic safety department.

Local officials eye real estate fee for roads

A new candidate for road funds popped up at a meeting in Lansing of western Oakland County officials.

They suggested real estate transfer fees in a two-hour meeting with state Sen. Richard Fessler, R-West Bloomfield. They discussed a fee of up to \$3 per \$1,000 of property value.

"The focus so far has been development impact fees and a local option fuel tax," said Rick Simonson, an aide to Fessler who attended the session. "The real estate transfer fee was new."

FESSLER, CHAIRMAN of the Senate Transportation Committee, is drafting bills that will help Oakland County raise up to \$74 million a year for 10 years — a target the County Road Commission set after polling local officials on road needs.

His bills are in what his aide called "star run" form — they're being corrected and marked up prior to introduction.

Some 25 officials from Farmington to Brandon Township attended the session.

"In light of Gov. Blanchard's opposition to raising the (state) gas tax," Fessler said in prepared remarks, "these options are even more necessary if we are to provide the infrastructure needed to implement Michigan's economic development recovery."

His bills will allow counties to levy a local option fuel tax for roads, permit a county or local property tax for roads, allow a local option vehicle registration fee, permit counties to earmark unlevied millages for road improvements, and al-

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Blanchard's opposition to raising the (state) gas tax, these options are even more necessary if we are to provide the infrastructure needed to implement Michigan's economic development recovery.'

— Sen. Richard Fessler to Oakland officials

low local real estate title transfer fees.

All but the unlevied millage proposal would require voter approval.

MEANWHILE, Fessler said support is growing for the concept of three new trunklines in western Oakland County.

Six groups have written endorsements or passed resolutions of support. They are the cities of Farmington Hills and Wixom, the townships of Highland and Holly, and business associations in Highland and Milford.

The concept calls for state trunklines in the Haggerty Road corridor from the I-275 freeway stub in Novi north to M-59; the Milford road corridor between I-96 and M-59; and from M-59 to I-75 in what was supposed to be the corridor for the un-built M-275.

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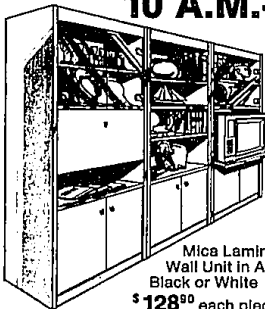
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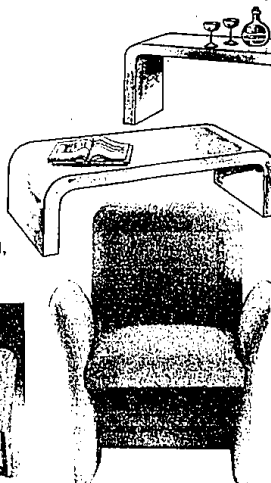
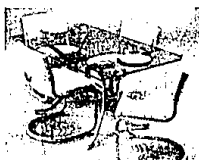


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