Spring Planning

Spring breakup is just around the corner! This time of year is an opportune time for viewing road drainage patterns. It can be helpful to record your findings on service area maps and take photos for future reference should you need to address any deficiencies.

Having problem areas marked on a map when the construction season rolls around can provide contractors and other commissioners with more detailed information. Problem areas can then be easily located and described to your contractor.

Even though blading and installing of culverts should not be performed during spring thaw, breakup does provide service areas an ideal opportunity to record defects and schedule repairs.

Grading/blading roadbed—The best time to blade a road is after a rain when the moisture content in the road material results in good compaction. Your road crown should also be restored to ensure good drainage.

Drainage—Poor drainage is a road’s worst enemy. Frozen or clogged culverts and ponding water affecting roadways contribute to saturating the road embankment. Subgrades and base course materials are strongest when kept relatively dry and compacted. This is an opportune time to identify these problems on your service area map and schedule necessary repairs.

Load limits—Springtime is weight restriction time. Melting snow and ice saturate and soften the ground. Heavily loaded trucks rolling over the soft road surface stress the roadbed causing cracks and potholes. Posting load limit signs can save your roads. Call us about what the limits are and during what period they apply.

Culvert markers/signage—Culvert markers, signs and posts often take a beating during winter. Check them now to make sure they are in place and in good repair.

Hardpack Removal—Be sure to schedule hardpack removal within your service area. Properly removing the hardpack will help facilitate proper drainage and allow residents to properly access their property. Don’t let your roads turn to slush!
Driveway and Utility Permits

Please keep in mind that permits are **required** for all work performed within the right of way of a service area road. As a commissioner, it is your responsibility to take note of any work or construction taking place within the right of way that is being performed by a resident, or a contractor, that was not ordered by the commission. Work performed by the service area contractor does not require a permit.

If a permit has been approved, Floyd will send a copy of the permit to the chair of the commission as a notice that the work has been approved. If you have NOT seen a permit associated with work being performed in your service area, please report the information to Floyd at 459-1203 or Floyd.Sheesley@fnsb.gov.

There are two types of permits issued to residents or contractors who perform work within the right of way of a service area road.

**Driveway Permit**: Issued when work is performed within the ROW but does not infringe upon the roadway itself. The majority of these are assigned to residents who are constructing or repairing driveways.

**Utility Permit**: Issued when work is being performed that will take place on the roadway itself. Tying in water lines, burying cable, phone or electrical lines all require utility permits.

For more information regarding permits, please call Floyd Sheesley at 459-1203.

Spring Flooding

**Open culvert thawing PO’s now!**

Many service areas experience varying degrees of flooding during spring thaw. The time to prepare for, and mitigate, as much flooding as possible is now!

Make sure all culverts are unobstructed and free from ice. This will allow the snow melt to flow properly and prevent potential damage to roadways and resident driveways or basements.

If you know your service area is prone to experience flooding, or suspect there may be a flooding concern, open a purchase order with a culvert steaming contractor now! Please keep in mind that work can NOT be requested without an approved purchase order. This can take up to 3-5 business days – time which typically cannot be wasted while active flooding is occurring. PLEASE PLAN ACCORDINLY!

Please remember that simply opening a PO is not requesting work or obligating a service area to spend funds. If the service area does not request work or spend funds with that contractor, the PO will be disencumbered, and the funds will remain with the service area.

If you are unsure if your service area currently has an open PO, whether they have done so in the past, or are unsure of availability of funds please contact Xena at 459-1223 to provide further assistance.

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**Webpage and Email Domain Migration**

In addition to the upgrade of the Fairbanks North Star Borough webpage is the migration to the .gov domain. Please begin using .gov for all borough related email addresses or webpages. This does NOT include commissioner email addresses. Those have NOT been changed at this time.

When emailing borough staff, please be sure to update email address domains to .gov. All emails should be formatted as First.Last@fnsb.gov OR Dept@fnsb.gov.

Emails sent to .us addresses are currently being forwarded to the .gov inbox and are still being received. However, please update your contacts at your earliest convenience to prevent any issues in the future.
Commissioner Training

Due to COVID-19, Rural Services has been unable to provide in person training to commissioners. Until we can continue to meet in person, we have provided access to training materials on our webpage under ‘Service Area Commissioner Resources’ under the ‘Training Material’ section. In addition to the presentation material, we have activated the speaker note portion of the presentation which provides a better understanding of the subject material.

The Commissioner Handbook is also a wonderful resource that can answer most questions. This handbook introduces the service area system, provides information regarding service area finances, explains the role of the Rural Services Division, outlines the role of the service area commission and provides information regarding maintenance, contracts and planning. This handbook also includes a copy of the Standard Specifications for Local Road Maintenance, which details the level of service the contractor is required to provide per contract. Physical copies can be picked up at the Rural Services office located at 520 5th avenue or found online at www.fnsb.gov/376/Service-Area-Commissioner-Resources.

As always, we are willing to provide one-on-one training to commissioners upon request. Please contact Jamie at 459-1222 to discuss training material and delivery options.