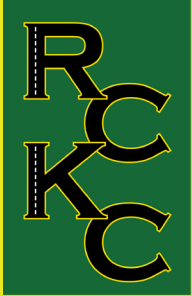


# Down the Road



Road  
Commission  
of Kalamazoo  
County

**2022 Spring/Summer  
NEWSLETTER**



# Managing Director's Message

## Stay Connected!

I know we are all very busy and the amount of communication channels can be overwhelming! As we move into another very busy construction season, we ask that you consider tuning in to our MANY channels to stay up to date with what is happening in our great county and in infrastructure investment.



always reviewing priorities; our first and foremost statutory duty of the work or emergencies necessary for safety in the traveled portion of the roadway. A time reference for all our work and competing priorities vary for trees (not impacting the roadway), signs, shoulders, mowing, etc. – all important, but not always an immediate priority. We have three (3) main priority groups for service requests which support our statutory duty. If we have an email or cellular telephone number with a service request we can provide automatically you updates as we process it. You can also track the progress of a service request in the “Active and Pending Service Requests Report” which is updated weekly.

### RCKC Connect

Sign up to receive messages in the best method that works for you. This mass notification system will keep you up to date as projects proceed this summer across the county and in your township.

### Social Media Platforms

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn

### 2022 Projects

Larger projects across the county will have informational meetings scheduled. There is also a complete list of projects throughout the county on our website. Can't make it, no problem, a recording will be provided on our website. We rely on a team of construction professionals who work on projects across the State; therefore approximate date of completion are difficult to refine. We work hard in our weekly updates to provide just in time project information.

### Board Meetings/ Township Joint Meetings

Please consider attending our Board meetings. Can't make it, no problem, a recording will be provided on our website and Public Media Network. You can also participate in Board meetings by Zoom. We also schedule Township Joint meetings at township halls for Townships who are interested in having us visit locally throughout the county. We have already completed one Township Joint meeting in Wakeshma Township – Thank you!

### Contact Us/ Service Requests

We are interested in your service requests. This service request process is the most efficient and effective method of communication and reporting mechanisms for any and all service needs on our road network. We are

### RCKC Website

Visit the site for a lot of information. You can also subscribe to our website news feed. Can't find something you are looking for, please let us know.

**We hope these communication channels will assist in keeping all of us informed and make all our way around the county during the construction season a little smoother. Please use extra caution in work zones—WORK ZONES ARE A SIGN TO SLOW DOWN!**

Sincerely,  
*Joanna I. Johnson,*  
Managing Director

## Welcome to the RCKC Team!



-Albert-John (AJ) Rogers  
-Carson King  
-Kimberly Bodnar  
-Sarah Phillips  
-Joseph Welborn

## We're Hiring! Join an award winning team in public service

Visit our website to view our current open positions at [www.kalamazooountyroads.com/jobopenings](http://www.kalamazooountyroads.com/jobopenings)

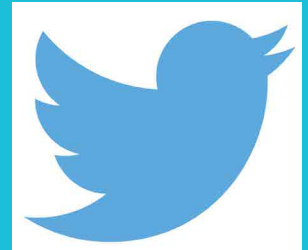
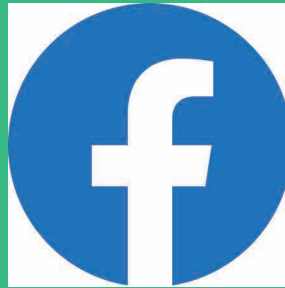
# Keep in Touch With Us!

269-381-3171

3801 E Kilgore Road  
Kalamazoo, MI 49001

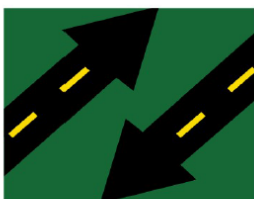
[www.kalamazoocountyroads.com](http://www.kalamazoocountyroads.com)

Regular Business Hours:  
7:30am - 4:00pm



## Sign up for RCKC CONNECT!

CONNECT TO ROAD COMMISSION  
OF KALAMAZOO COUNTY ALERTS



RCKC CONNECT  
RCKC ALERTS SIGN UP NOW

### HAVE YOU SIGNED UP?

Receive Message Alerts for:

- ◆ Road Construction
- ◆ Road Closures/Detours
- ◆ General Public News



To Sign Up Visit: [www.kalamazoocountyroads.com](http://www.kalamazoocountyroads.com)

RCKC CONNECT is a mass notification service that allows RCKC to send citizens voice and/or text messages to home phones, businesses, local agencies and mobile phones in just minutes regarding road closures, detours, and road construction projects. Citizens can choose to receive notifications about RCKC events that may affect their home, workplace, schools and more.

RCKC CONNECT is also a great way for the RCKC to remind citizens of upcoming public meetings and RCKC General News.

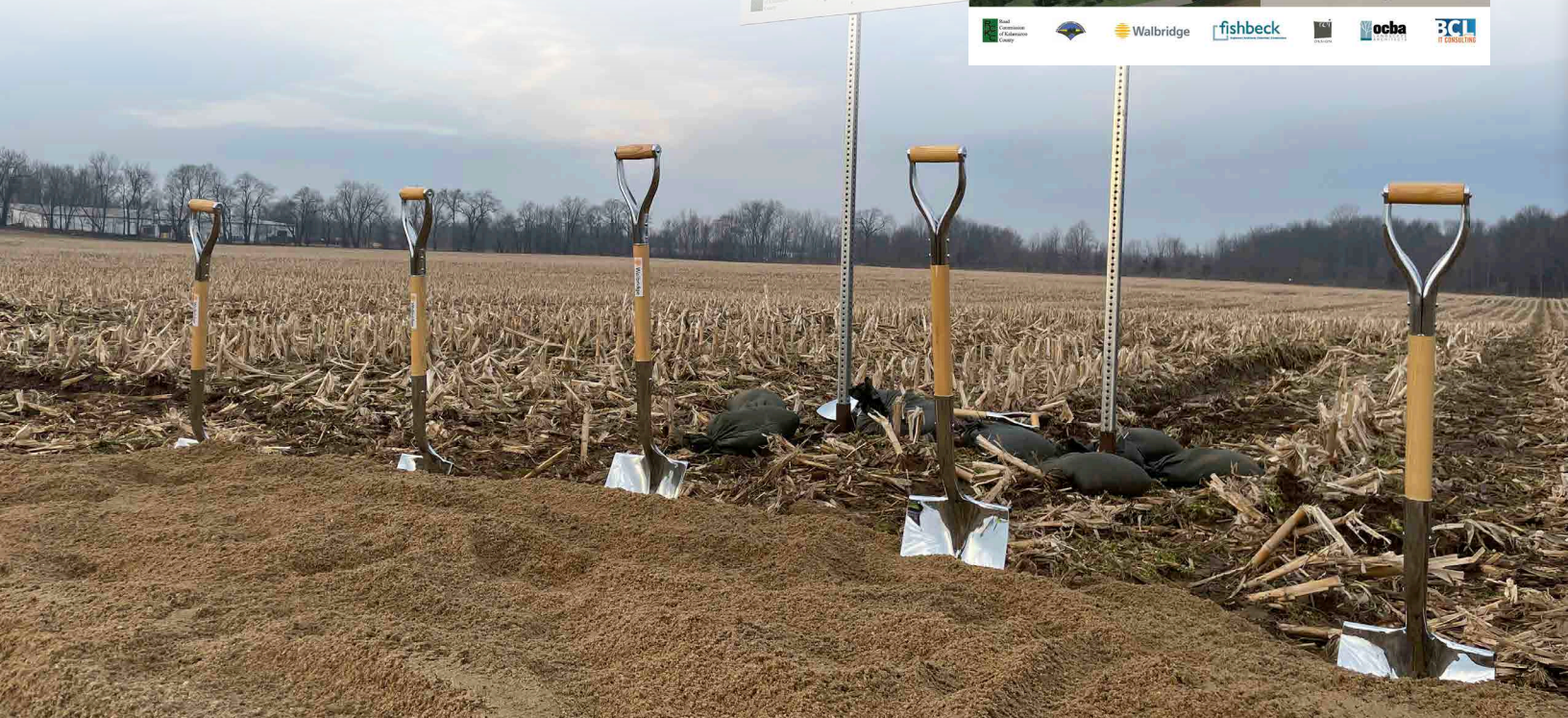
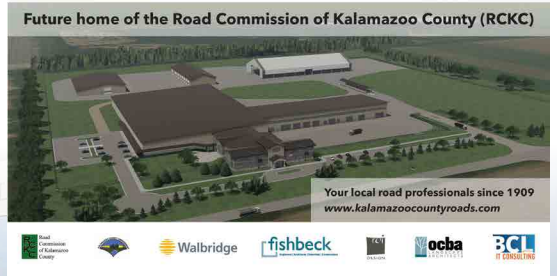


# WE'RE MOVING!

The RCKC broke ground on Tuesday, March 15th at 26th Street north of N Avenue in Comstock Township, celebrating the start of construction on our new complex.

The decision to relocate facilities resulted after a 2020 site review study by a certified architectural and engineering construction firm. The Kilgore Road facility has been the home of the RCKC for the majority of its over 110-year existence, with building assets original construction dating back to the 1940s. The study identified necessary renovations and improvements to our current facility, including cost, energy and operational efficiencies, location, construction schedule interference with our operations, environmental impacts and property capacity. The study prompted RCKC to compare our renovation limitations from the Kilgore Road facility to a new site. After reviewing the results of the study and comparison, RCKC moved to begin planning the construction of a new facility. The purchase of a 40-acre parcel of land was approved at the September 29, 2020 Board meeting. RCKC is among a small list of Road Commissions who only have one centrally located facility to service our entire county network of infrastructure.

Phase 1 of the new facility consists of construction of a new building for salt/sand storage and weigh scale. Estimated completion of Phase 1 is fall of 2023. Construction of the remaining facilities, Phase 2 is estimated for the Spring of 2024. The RCKC plans to remain at its current location until 2024.



# A LOOK BACK IN RCKC HISTORY

The RCKC's roots date back to the early 19th and 20th century, during the time that the "Good Roads Movement" was occurring. PA 149 of 1893 provided for the creation of county road systems within Michigan. The PA enabled counties to establish county road commissions through an election called by the County Board of Supervisors. Some of the earliest advocates for good roads was the League of American Wheelmen, which actively supported the interests of bicyclists.

The movement to develop countywide "good roads" had its beginning in the enabling legislation in 1893, but was just beginning to face the public as a ballot issue. There was a good deal of opposition to creating county road commissions. At this time, there were only about 3,000 registered automobiles in the state of Michigan. Township residents were already paying a road tax for the improvement and repair of township roads. A county road tax would be an additional tax with no guarantee that the funds would be spent equally throughout the county.

By 1905, only 18 other counties had established boards of county road commissioners, as opposed to now. Petitions were filed with the Kalamazoo County Board of Supervisors, requesting that the April 1907 ballot include language to create the The Board of Road Commissioners of the County of Kalamazoo. The measure was defeated by a relatively close margin. The local organizers were not discouraged by the results. Two years later another election was scheduled for April 1909. This time the measure was approved by a majority of 477 voters.

W. M. Bryant, Byron S. Camey and Charles E. Clark were appointed road commissioners on April 30, 1909. At this meeting the commissioners recommended that a total of 2 miles of road in each township in this county be laid out for the year 1910. PA 283 of 1909 helped organize laws surrounding roads and county road commissions, and established that road associations strive to achieve two primary goals: To provide continuity in road construction and maintenance across the state; and to provide cost-efficient and high-quality road services for county roads.

The first meeting of the Board was held in May 1909. Because of the limited range of vehicles in the first half of the 1900s, the RCKC had satellite garages in addition to its facility on Mill Street, near 3rd Street and adjacent to the Grand Trunk Railroad tracks. In the 1920s, they primarily used equipment that was surplus World War I property.

One of the early road commission workhorses was the road grader. In 1910, these scrapers were pulled by 80 horsepower tractors and by Liberty trucks. The Boy Scouts of America were helpful in evaluating the traffic that used the roadways from the 1910s through the 1940s. Two or three of the boys would camp out for 24 to 36 hours at a time at selected locations to get an actual count of the type and time of traffic that passed by them.

Roadway snow removal, as it's known today, began during the winter of 1917-18. With World War I efforts absorbing a considerable amount of available material, the railroads found themselves overloaded and congested. An alternative transport system was needed to guarantee delivery of materials from Michigan to the East Coast to support the war that was raging in Europe. The alternative was to move trucks over the public highways. Therefore, in January 1918, the state of Michigan ordered that certain routes (including Lansing to Chicago by way of Kalamazoo) be immediately opened and kept open to the free passage of autos and trucks. The Board noted in its October 1920 report to the County Board of Supervisors that, during the winter of 1919-1920, there was no day during the winter when the east-west trunk line (part of the designated route from Lansing to Chicago) was not open for the passage of cars through this county. County road commissions were the first to employ front-end plows on their vehicles.

Road commissions have continued to creatively meet the needs of the public even as road networks, the population, and expectations have grown. The RCKC has and will continue to maintain a county road system that is safe and convenient for public travel, and innovating ways to better serve the public moving into the future.

(Source: This historical summary is a condensed version of "Kalamazoo County Road Commission -The Early Years" by Ronald E. Reid, past RCKC Managing Director)



RCKC 1923



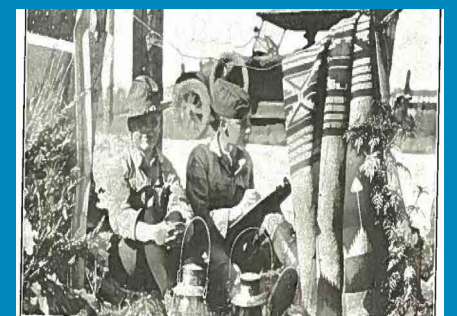
Early Grader



The Vicksburg Garage 1922



RCKC 1950



Boy Scouts doing a traffic count

# TOWNSHIP SPOTLIGHT: WAKESHMA TOWNSHIP



Wakeshma Township  
won 2 of the RCKC  
awards this year!

**2021 Road Warrior Award**  
Largest Improvement  
Pavement Surface Evaluation  
and Rating

**2021 Crown Award**  
Largest Improvement for  
Inventory Based Rating

# ON THE SCHEDULE

## Upcoming Project Infomational Meetings

Parkview Avenue, 11th Street, and 12th  
Street - Roundabout

Project Meeting Date: Wednesday, May 4, 6:00 pm at the  
Kalamazoo Christian Elementary, 3800 S. 12th Street,  
Kalamazoo, MI 49009

Sprinkle Road - East Main Street to G Avenue  
- Mill / HMA Overlay, Comstock Township

Project Meeting Date: Wednesday, May 11, 6:00 pm at the  
Comstock Township Hall, 6138 King Highway, Kalama-  
zoo, MI 49048

TU Avenue and 23rd Street - Roundabout

Project Meeting Date: Wednesday, May 25, 6:00pm at the  
Schoolcraft Township Hall, 50 East VW Avenue, Vicks-  
burg, MI 49097

Learn more at [kalamazoocountyroads.com/projects](https://kalamazoocountyroads.com/projects)

## Board Meetings

The Board's regular meetings, to which the public is invited, are held at 3:00 p.m. on alternate Tuesdays at the Road Commission office, 3801 East Kilgore Road, Kalamazoo, Michigan. A meeting schedule and meeting Zoom link can also be found on the Meetings section of the RCKC website at <https://www.kalamazoocountyroads.com/meetings.php>.

## Touch-a-Truck



**Saturday, May 7th**

Kalamazoo Co. Expo Center & Fairgrounds



**RCKC will be there!**  
**Bring the kids and**  
**come see us!**

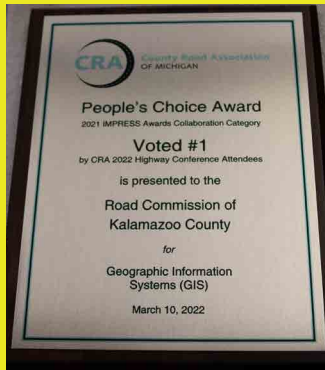
Learn more at [kalamazoo.jl.org](https://kalamazoo.jl.org)

**Closed for the Holidays**

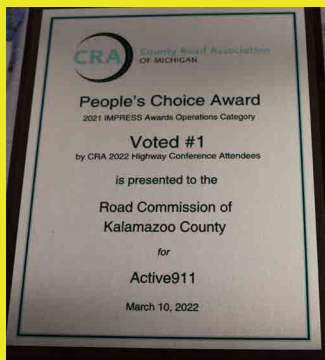
**May 30th, 2022**

**July 4th, 2022**

# WE ARE AWARD WINNING AT THE COUNTY ROAD ASSOCIATION (CRA) OF MICHIGAN HIGHWAY CONFERENCE!



**\*WINNER OF THE  
PEOPLE'S CHOICE  
AWARD!**



**\*WINNER OF THE  
PEOPLE'S CHOICE  
AWARD!**

## Hybrid Board Meetings

The RCKC began updating technology for our Board meetings in advance of 2020. The RCKC made the decision and necessary modifications in order to offer our bi-weekly Board meetings as "hybrid" meetings, meaning the meetings could be attended and participated in both virtually and in-person. The hybrid Board meetings were implemented and improved upon throughout the year of 2021, assisting in communications during the times when in-person meetings were discouraged, and continuing to foster increased attendance and communications in the present.



**Communications  
IMPRESS Award**

## Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Public Act 51 Certification Mapping\*

The Road Commission of Kalamazoo County (RCKC) partnered with the County of Kalamazoo Planning and Development Department (County Planning) to use Geographic Information Systems (GIS) in order to convert and present the annual Public Act 51 required mileage certification maps. The new GIS mileage certification maps would be an improvement on the RCKC's previous system and offered a variety of possibilities in multiple departments. The collaboration also presented positive opportunities for the County Planning and would mean that both County Planning and the RCKC would be able to present identical, more accurate maps to the public.



**Collaboration  
IMPRESS Award**

## Active 911\*

The RCKC has partnered with Kalamazoo County Consolidated Dispatch to introduce Active911 emergency response software into our operations. Active911 is a response software that coordinates with county dispatchers to send notifications to emergency responders, such as the RCKC, using the Active911 mobile application (APP) ActiveAlert. This communications tool between KCCDA and the RCKC assists the operations of both organizations in efficiently and effectively responding to emergency road related situations.



**Operations  
IMPRESS Award**



# SPRING CLEANING

## Household Hazardous Waste Center

When you're doing your spring cleaning, don't forget about the Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Center!

Service is FREE for Kalamazoo County residents with the exception of Climax Township. Please call 269-383-8742 for the current participation fee and approximate disposal fee.

The HHW Center is located at 1301 Lamont Avenue, Kalamazoo Michigan 49048 on the northwest corner of the Kalamazoo County Fairgrounds. The HHW Center is on the same street as the Sheriff's Department and Animal Services.

Tuesday & Friday: 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday Noon - 6:00 p.m.

Second Saturday of the Month (Except August and September) 8:00 a.m. - Noon

During inclement weather Kalamazoo County may choose to close all county programs. Please call if you are unsure. The HHW Center may also close due to unforeseen circumstances such as power outages.

See website for more information and list of accepted materials

<https://www.kalcounty.com/hcs/eh/hhw/>

## Commonly Asked Spring Questions

### **Does RCKC remove dead animals from the road or side of the road?**

If a dead animal is causing a road hazard, or blocking the traveled portion of the road; RCKC crews will move the dead animal off the road and let nature take its course. Our crews will make an effort, if we find a tag or telephone number, to contact the owner of a domestic dead animal. We will not dispose of any dead animals.

### **Who is responsible for the removal of dead/dying trees in the right-of-way?**

Dead/dying trees located in the right-of-way are the responsibility of the property owner for removal. The RCKC may remove trees from the public right-of-way that is not designed for vehicular travel, but has the discretion not to do so. If a property owner wishes to remove, trim or prune a tree that is located in the ROW they must complete a permit application to work within the public right-of-way with the RCKC. A right-of-way application is available on our Permit page of this website. The permit fee may be waived. See our Roadside Vegetation Management Policy on our website

### **Who is responsible for picking up litter and debris from the roadside? i.e. mattresses, garbage, furniture, etc.**

Road Commissions are responsible for the construction or maintenance of public roads within the state per Public Act (PA) 51. We are not responsible for roadside litter of any type. Some townships may have litter ordinances that apply for possible enforcement.



# Looking to plant some trees this Spring near RCKC maintained roads? Follow these Guidelines!

Trees do add beauty, color and character to our roadsides, but if they're too close to the road edge, they can be both hazardous and a potential liability for property owners, utilities and the Road Commission. Use of our guidelines can help you choose the right tree for the right place, which, in turn, can improve the likelihood of tree survival and reduce maintenance as the tree grows to maturity

**Before planting, determine the best location for planting:**

## 1. PLAN

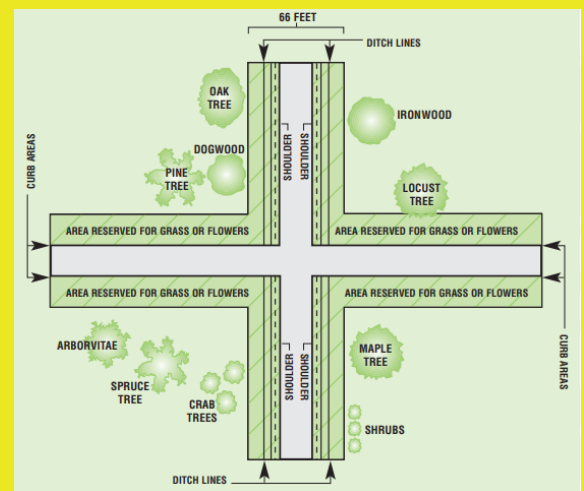
Consider your goals. Why are you planting? To screen a view, reduce noise, enhance beauty or property value, or for some other reason?

## 2. CONSIDER SITE CONDITIONS

Are there overhead or underground utilities? Is the site near a sidewalk or driveway? Take into consideration soil conditions, soil drainage and likely road maintenance activities, such as snow removal, salt runoff, ditching, brush control and water drainage. Also consider the mature width of the tree and its impact on the road right-of-way and motorist safety.

## 3. CONSIDER THE TREE OR SHRUB ITSELF

Estimate the amount of space available for the tree or shrub to grow in, not only above ground, but also below ground. Think about the tree's mature size and shape. Tree roots expand beyond a tree's drip line and should not be too close to sidewalks, roads, buildings, driveways or areas of compacted soil.



## What kind of trees should you plant?

-To help diversity, consider planting a tree that is a different species from those nearby. There are many suitable native trees that are available to plant.

-Some trees can be planted in groupings— similar to a park setting. These groupings should be well away from the road edge, and the trees should be adequately spaced to not crowd each other.

- Many potential planting sites for trees are unsuitable because of power lines, existing trees or other space restrictions. Such areas may be better suited for a variety of shrubbery that has a smaller mature height and width than trees.

Please note: STATE LAW REQUIRES THAT YOU CALL MISS DIG AT 1-800-482-7171 at least three full working days before you dig so that underground cables or equipment can be staked so you will not interfere with them. There is no charge for this service.

We've also prepared a brochure that provides more guidelines on the roadside planting of trees and shrubs. See **Guidelines for Planting Trees and Shrubs Near Roads Maintained by the RCKC** under the Resources page on our website.

Equipment demonstration on 47th Street, Wakeshma Township



35th Street and Shadowlane signal replacement, Pavilion Township



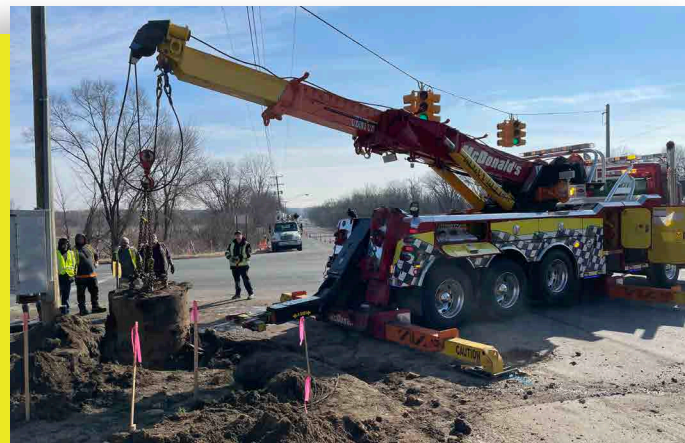
Tree work on Barney Road, Kalamazoo Township



Shoulder trenching on S Avenue, Pavilion Township



# CONSTRUCTION SEASON IS HERE!



Signal replacement at Barney Road and Mosel Avenue, Kalamazoo Township

Stay informed about current project progress and upcoming projects in many different ways!

\*We release weekly construction updates at [www.kalamazoocountyroads.com/news](http://www.kalamazoocountyroads.com/news).

\*Sign up for RCKC Connect to get news releases sent directly to your devices.

\*Follow us on Facebook. We post construction updates, news releases, and project photos.

\*Learn about upcoming projects in the years to come and project informational meetings at [www.kalamazoocountyroads.com/projects](http://www.kalamazoocountyroads.com/projects)