



# Down the Road



2024 Spring/Summer  
**NEWSLETTER**







# A WORD FROM OUR MANAGING DIRECTOR

Joanna I. Johnson,  
Managing Director

Dear Members of the Kalamazoo County Community,

Welcome to the vibrant seasons of spring and summer, where our construction is in full bloom! As we embrace the warmth and energy that comes with this time of the year, we are thrilled to share our investments in our community.

We are now in our new home at 4400 S 26th Street in Comstock Township! We celebrated with a public open house in March. We appreciate all those who attended and we encourage those who are interested in seeing this investment in public service to contact us for a tour.

We also find ourselves amidst another busy road construction and maintenance season, with approximately 200 projects currently under our management. It's a testament to the dedication and hard work of our team, contractors and vendors that we're able to handle such a significant workload with efficiency and excellence. These projects represent more than just asphalt and roadside management; they signify progress, connectivity, and safety for our communities. Each road we mend, every intersection we improve, is a step forward in enhancing the lives of those who rely on our infrastructure. Together, we are shaping our infrastructure for generations to come.

I want to extend my heartfelt appreciation to every member of our RCKC team. Their commitment 24/7, 365 days a year is the driving forces behind our success in public service.

As we navigate through the blooming months of orange barrels; please be patient, follow designated detour routes, and safety in construction zones. Please follow the instructions of traffic regulators throughout the State.

Together, let's make this construction season one of success, achievement, progress and SAFETY FIRST. Thank you to the public for the trust you put in us in maintaining our infrastructure in Kalamazoo County.

Sincerely,  
*Joanna Johnson Managing Director  
Road Commission of Kalamazoo County*



## RCKC HONORED WITH FIVE STATEWIDE IMPRESS AWARDS!



The Road Commission of Kalamazoo County (RCKC) was honored with three statewide IMPRESS Awards and a People's Choice Award at the 2024 County Road Association (CRA) of Michigan Highway Conference held in late March in Lansing. IMPRESS Awards recognize county road agencies that demonstrate innovation on noteworthy projects in the categories of Communications, Operations and Collaboration.

This year, RCKC received an IMPRESS Award in Collaboration for "Lake Street project collaboration;" an award in Communications for "Township Lunch and Learns;" and an award in Operations for "Chip sealing light."

"Road Commission of Kalamazoo County's outstanding three awards prove they have a deep commitment to safe operations, cost effectiveness and external communication," said Denise Donohue, CRA CEO. "The road commission continues to serve its community by ensuring best practices on the roads."

### Collaboration

In 2023, RCKC managed a project on Lake Street with the City of Kalamazoo and Kalamazoo Township, consisting of water main replacement, sanitary sewer and sidewalk installation, road reconstruction and drainage improvements. This collaborative approach reduced time, cost, user delays and wear-and-tear on the road.

### Communications

RCKC introduced "Lunch and Learns" in 2023 as a new opportunity to meet, collaborate and chat with its township partners. Communication between townships and road commissions is crucial for effective and efficient infrastructure management. RCKC founded a new communication avenue to talk things through.

### Operations

Two years ago, RCKC introduced a modified signal light into its chip seal operations. This light replaced the use of hand signals and has been effective in increasing safety, accuracy and efficiency out on the road projects. This entry was also awarded the People's Choice Award.

An independent panel of communications and operations experts from several of Michigan's 83 county road agencies judged all IMPRESS Awards submissions. Award recipients were honored for projects that solved time constraints, labor costs, communication barriers and fostered collaboration.

## BOARD OF COUNTY ROAD COMMISSIONERS

The Board's regular public meetings, are held at 3:00 p.m. on alternate Tuesdays at the Road Commission office, 4400 S 26th Street Kalamazoo, MI 49048. A meeting schedule and meeting Zoom link can be found on the Meetings tab of the RCKC website at [www.kalamazooountyroads.com/meetings.php](http://www.kalamazooountyroads.com/meetings.php).

The 2023 Annual Report is now available! Check it out on our website!

# CONSTRUCTION SEASON 2024

Thanks to a fair weather spring, some of our 2024 projects are already well underway! Some of the more extensive primary road projects to watch in 2024 include the following:

Visit our website for a list of current and upcoming projects: <https://www.kalamazooountyroads.com/projects.php>

**9th Street**  
(Stadium Drive - KL Avenue)  
*Mill/Hot Mix Asphalt (HMA) Overlay*

**Stadium Drive**  
(8th Street -9th Street)  
*Mill/HMA Overlay*

**MN Avenue/Mercury Drive**  
(44th Street -E Michigan Avenue)  
*HMA Overlay/Intersection Improvements*

**Squires Drive**  
(Drake Rd - Ravine Rd)  
*Intersection Improvements/Pulverize/  
HMA Overlay/Shoulder Widen*

**Douglas Avenue**  
(City Limits - Mosel Avenue)  
*Mill/HMA Overlay*

**W Avenue**  
(42nd Street -44th Street)  
*Pulverize/HMA Overlay/Shoulder Widen*

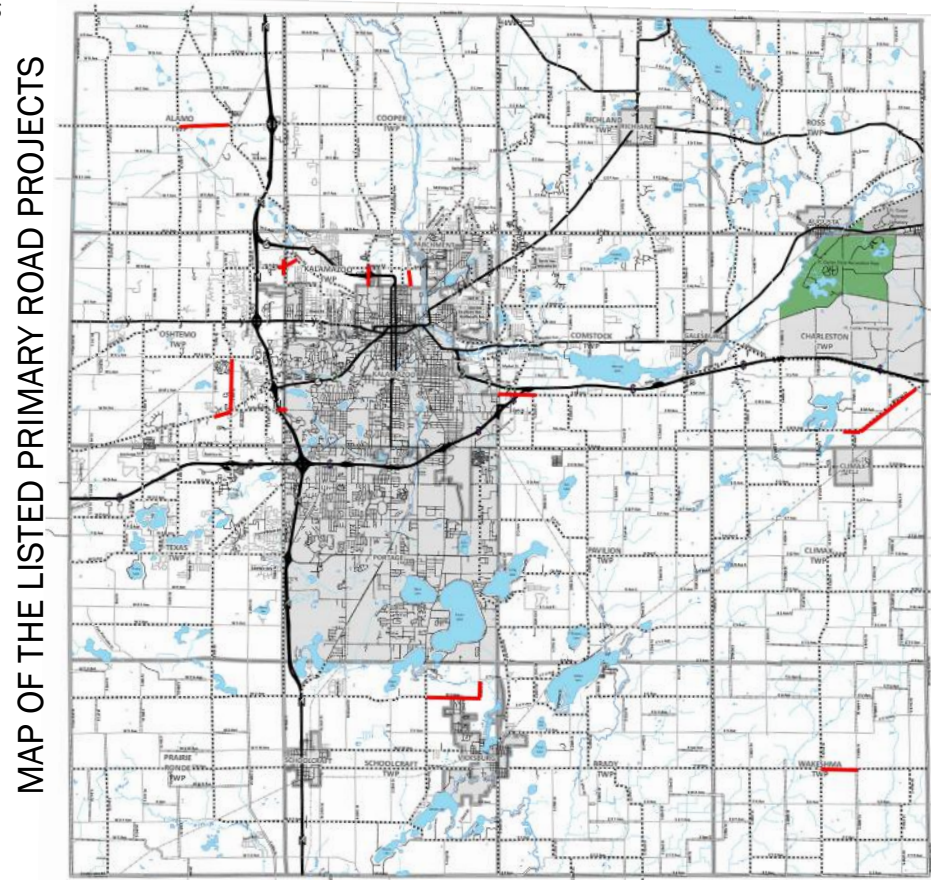
**D Avenue**  
(6th Street -Ravine Road)  
*HMA Overlay*

**ML Avenue**  
(Sprinkle Road-26th St)  
*HMA Overlay*

**U Avenue/23rd Street**  
(Portage Road - TU Avenue)  
*Pulverize/HMA Overlay/Shoulder Widen*

**Pitcher Street**  
(City Limits - Mosel Avenue)  
*HMA Overlay*

**Parkview Avenue**  
(US 131-Drake Rd)  
*Mill/HMA Overlay*





# WE MOVED!

The RCKC team officially entered our new home in March, 2024. This was the result of years of study, followed by two years of construction, and will ultimately lend to serving our goal to serve the public in the coming years.



## FAST FACTS

**Total Cost of the 40 acres:**  
\$900,000

**Total cost of the complex:**  
Estimate: \$65,279,102

**Bond amount:**  
\$55,235,000

**3801 E Kilgore Road:**  
Property sold for \$3,800,000

**Radiant in floor tubing:**  
Approximately 43 miles

**Roof:**  
15.5% of the entire site is under roof. A total of 6.2 acres of roof.

**Rebar:**  
Approximately 340 tons

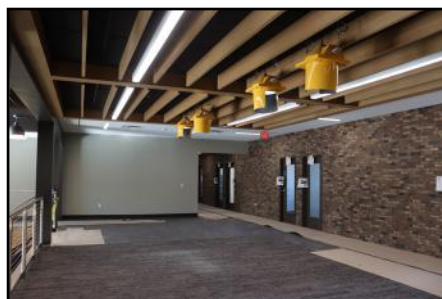
**Number of light fixtures on site (exterior and interior):**  
1,035

**Number of workers:**  
Approximately 800

**Number of working hours:**  
Approximately 210,000 - 220,000

**Sprinkler heads:**  
1,695

**Concrete poured:**  
25,200 cubic yards



**The RCKC celebrated this historical move a public open house for the community on March 21st. Thank you to all who attended to make this event memorable!**



## **WHY THE NEED FOR A NEW RCKC COMPLEX?**

- **AGE AND CONDITION OF FACILITIES (BUILT IN 1940'S) LIMITED SPACE AND STORAGE CAPACITY RENOVATIONS WOULD HAVE CAUSED DISRUPTION TO OPERATIONS**
- **ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS - PROXIMITY TO DAVIS CREEK INEFFICIENT MATERIAL STORAGE**
- **LIFE SAFETY HAZARD AND CODE ISSUES VEHICLE/EQUIPMENT STORAGE ISSUES - DID NOT MEET OUR CURRENT**
- **CAPACITY AND INEFFICIENT LAYOUT**
- **LIMITED GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES**
- **LACK OF UNITY BETWEEN DEPARTMENTS DUE TO PROXIMITY OF FACILITIES**



# RCKC TRANSPORTATION SAFETY ACTION PLAN



Full Plan: [www.kalamazooountyroads.com/upload/resources/91/RCKC%20Transportation%20Safety%20Action%20Plan%202023.pdf](http://www.kalamazooountyroads.com/upload/resources/91/RCKC%20Transportation%20Safety%20Action%20Plan%202023.pdf)

## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

**324**

Survey responses

**184**

Location specific concerns collected

## AVERAGE FOR RCKC NETWORK:

*Approximately*

**15**  
Fatal crashes per year

**1,700**  
crashes per year

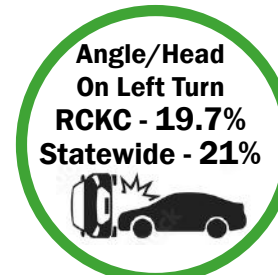
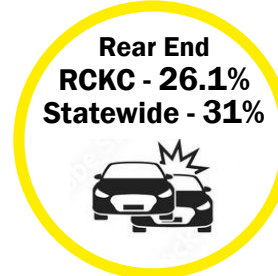
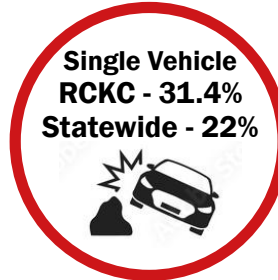
**61**  
Serious injury crashes per year



Overall crashes are declining at an annual average rate of 1%

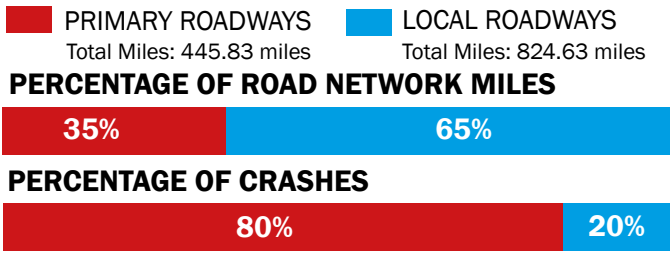
Fatal crashes and serious injury crashes are increasing at an annual average rate of 1.5% and 6.7%, respectively

## MOST PREVALENT CRASH TYPES



## THEMES OF THE SURVEY FEEDBACK:

- Congestion
- Delineation
- Speeding
- Curves
- Lack of shoulders
- Narrow lanes
- Pavement conditions
- Signal timing
- Turning movements
- Visibility
- Wide roads
- Lack/condition of non-motorized facilities



## FREQUENT MENTIONED COUNTERMEASURES:

- Drainage maintenance or improvements.
- Signage review and improvements
- Shoulder improvements
- Signal optimization and coordination updates
- Installation of turn lanes
- Access management
- Intersection Improvements
- Removal of fixed objects from the right of way
- Manage vegetation overgrowth and sight distance



The percentage of fatal and serious injury crashes is **HIGHER** on RCKC's network than the overall county and statewide

Total crashes for the RCKC network are **LOWER** on RCKC's network than the overall county and statewide

## EMPHASIS AREAS

(Highest fatalities/serious injuries associated)

### Occupant Protection:



### Senior Mobility and Safety:



### Lane departure



### Intersection crashes:



### Impaired Driving:



# ASK A PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER

We wanted to provide an update regarding the recent legislative changes regarding speed limits, particularly under Public Act (PA) 33 of 2024. This legislation has prompted us to closely examine its potential impacts in collaboration with the County Road Association (CRA) of MI and the Michigan State Police (MSP).

As discussions unfold statewide, it has come to our attention that some media coverage may be misleading. Therefore, we aim to offer clarity on the matter. At present, our focus lies in understanding the implications of PA 33 of 2024. It is essential to note that further conversations are necessary before we can ascertain the overall impacts it may have statewide.



One significant aspect of this legislation is the consideration of hazards not reflected in the eighty-fifth percentile speed. This criterion represents a substantial threshold that must be met before any adjustments to speed limits can be made. To provide context, the legislation states: "...A speed limit established under this section may be set below the eighty-fifth percentile speed if an engineering and safety study demonstrates a situation with hazards to public safety that are not reflected by the eighty-fifth percentile speed..." This clause underscores the importance of conducting thorough engineering and safety assessments to ensure that any adjustments to speed limits prioritize public safety, if a hazard was not previously identified.

As we continue to engage in dialogue and analysis, we remain committed to keeping you informed about any developments related to PA 33 of 2024 and its impact on our roadways. Want to learn more about speed limits? See our Brochures and Other Materials at the RCKC website.

## Keep in Touch With Us!

269-381-3171

4400 S 26th Street

Kalamazoo, MI 49048

[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**

**TO SIGN UP VISIT: [www.kalamazoocountyroads.com](http://www.kalamazoocountyroads.com)**

**HAVE YOU SIGNED UP?**

Receive Message Alerts for:

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





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.

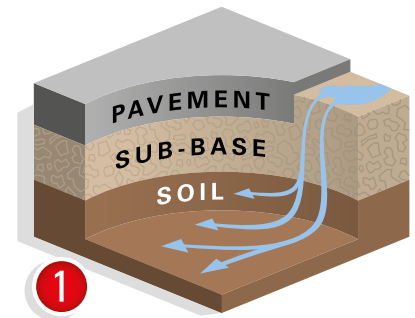
# ? FAQ CORNER: How does the RCKC decide which projects get funded? ?

Projects for potential funding are reviewed for areas including pavement conditions, traffic patterns, feedback from both the public and RCKC team and a balance of how much money is available. Projects are evaluated for what type of fix may be appropriate to preserve roads in good condition—"the right fix, at the right time." Federal Aid funding may vary, as not all roads are on the federal aid system, and therefore eligible to receive federal aid funds. RCKC must always balance the amount of money available and what type of fix would be appropriate to preserve our overall road system. RCKC annually reviews the primary and local road system to update the Road Capital Improvement Plan. This Road Capital Improvement Plan along with our preventive maintenance projects, such as seal coat (chip seal) assists in long term preservation of our infrastructure within budget limitations. ([See Road Capital Improvement Plan on our website](#))

RCKC annually partners with our township governments for local road improvement priorities. The RCKC maintains a local road participation fund program that provides funds for each township that must be matched on a dollar-for-dollar basis for local road improvement projects. 5-year plans are also developed with each township, considering asset management data.

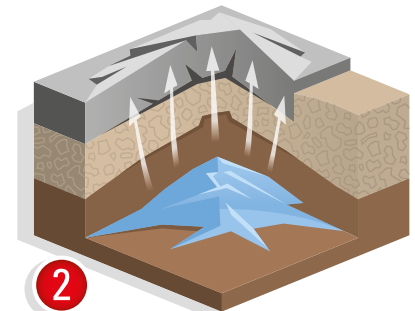


## The Birth of a Pothole



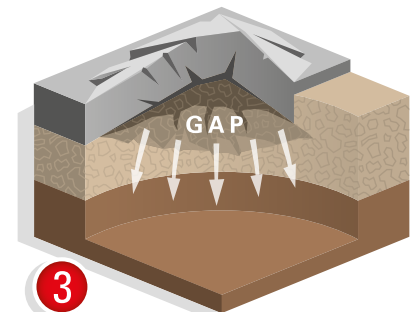
1

Potholes begin after snow or rain seeps into the soil below the road surface.



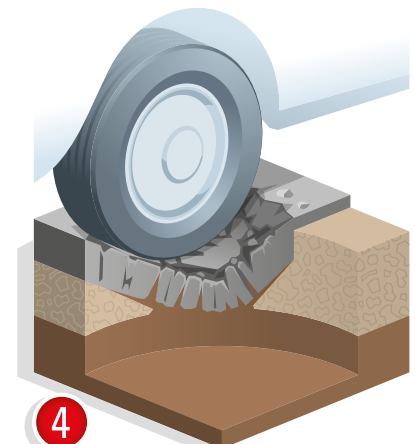
2

The moisture freezes when temperatures drop, causing the ground to expand and push the pavement up.



3

As temperatures rise, the ground returns to normal level but the pavement often remains raised. This creates a gap between the pavement and the ground below it.



4

When vehicles drive over this cavity, the pavement surface cracks and falls into the hollow space, leading to the birth of another pothole.

Credit: County Road Association of Michigan