

District 3: Road and Bridge Report

Don Hawthorne, County Commissioner District 3

The May flood is old news now, but the effect on our road work lasted much longer. More than half of the 625 miles of road in the Western District needed some degree of repair, from grading to complete rock replacement.

Twenty of our 135 bridges in the District needed some work, mostly debris removal. There were 5 road closures, all but one caused by tindhorn wash outs. Our biggest closure was the bridge on Cross Road over Sandy Creek. That one cost us over \$50,000 in manpower, equipment and materials to get it open again.

We have been working with the Federal Highway Administration and Oklahoma Department of Transportation for reimbursement on the work we have done clearing out debris and working on road and bridge repair due to the flood. As of now, they approved us for \$175,644.26 on 7 of our 9 projects involving major collector roads.

We have had several meetings with FEMA to get funds for three categories of damage: debris removal, emergency repair, and permanent work. It is too early to know how much money they will provide for our flood related damage.

During the night of the flood (May 22) and on into the next morning, Forman Kenny Kinder, A.D. Fischer, Flint Runyon, Melvin Beeson, Mark Barefoot, Carl Mullins, and Brad Jones were on hand to help rescue folks with the front-end loaders and graders. On Saturday, most of the District 3 crew cleared roads and made them passable, several men working with little to no

sleep.

The County Barn became a meeting place for area residents that had been flooded to receive initial instruction on how to receive FEMA aid. Debbie McDonald did an excellent job as our coordinator.

Because of the flood damage, we are about 2 months behind getting started on oiling and chipping the 12 miles of roads we had planned for this summer. The road crew just started getting the mile of Bishop Road between Red Elk and Deyo Roads ready to oil and chip. Next we will work on Airport Road from Cache Road to the dead end. The latter is part of a partnered cooperative agreement between Comanche Nation, District 3 and the City of Cache. The rest of this partnered agreement are the streets on the east side of the City of Cache. Because of the delay caused by flooding, we are looking at the feasibility of contracting this portion out.

Under State Statute, we can provide assistance to the Public Schools in our District. We spread material on Indianoma Public School's playground. We removed dirt in the bar ditches at Cache Public School to allow the water to drain better along H Street. We hauled dirt to Chattanooga Public School's ball diamond, and recycled the street in front on the school.

I have been coordinating completion of the County budget for 2015-16 again this year. After meeting with all elected officials and department heads to hear their budget requests, it totaled to \$10,411,001.55. We have a projected revenue of \$8,719,500. To develop a balanced budget, I looked at every possible area to make reductions without cutting workforce and required duties of county government. I expect to complete the process this month and have it ready to go before the Excise Board.

If you have questions or concerns, I can be contacted at don.hawthorne@comanchecounty.us or you may phone the Courthouse or County Barn and I will return your call.

You can access this report monthly on the county website as well as the County Times. The official website (www.comanchecounty.us) is maintained by the Comanche County Public Information Officer.

