

## Private Roads Not the Same as Public Roads

Written by Ashleigh Balog

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When flash flooding came through Comanche County in May, it affected many of our public streets. Roads closed, low water crossings filled, and debris began to pile. The county responded quickly to remove this debris, allowing people to travel safely and emergency vehicles to respond as needed. After clearing the debris, the county continued to make emergency and permanent repairs to roads and bridges.

While the county worked to repair public roads, private roads were also subject to washout and other damage. Unfortunately, sometimes it is hard for homeowners to tell whether a road is private or public. Even if a street is named, a county road must be accepted by the County and certified by the Oklahoma Department of Transportation. This helps ensure that the road is built to county specifications. Don Hawthorne, District #3 Commissioner, suggests that before a buyer purchases a home or property they should determine if it is on a county or state road by contacting their commissioner.

Because a private road may not be built to county specifications, it makes it hard for the County to do work on them. For those living on a private road in need of repair, there are grants available through FEMA and low interest loans through the Small Business Administration (SBA). This way, residents can help pay a private contractor to do the repairs. For help in getting a grant or loan, visit the Disaster Recovery Center at Tomlinson Middle School, Monday-Saturday.

Both the Eastern and Western barns will be closed July 2-12 for their annual summer vacation. Having the whole barn take a break at one time is the most efficient way to handle vacations, Hawthorne explained. In case of emergency, call the Commissioner's office at the Courthouse 580-355-5802.

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