

District 3: Road and Bridge Report

Don Hawthorne, County Commissioner

I am reminded of two quotes regarding Oklahoma weather. To paraphrase an Ace Reed cartoon: the drought in SW Oklahoma is interrupted by periods of flooding. Will Rogers once said, "If you don't like the weather in Oklahoma wait 5 minutes and it will change". It seems like the weather this year has been crazier than others.

In my 7 years as Commissioner, we have gotten the sand trucks out each year over the Christmas holidays. This year it was on New Year's Eve. But enough about weather and on to roads and bridges!

We have completed our three asphalt overlay projects: the 82nd Street Project from Combs Road to State Highway 36, the Multiple Road Project that included Briarcreek and a portion of Heatherstone in Pecan Valley South, Deyo Mission from the Railroad tracks south to Lee Blvd, several portions of County Road 115 and Cache Road from 115 to the West Cache Creek Bridge, the Cache Road Project from Paint Road to County Road 115 and Showplace Ave. in Indianoma.

Because the 2" inch asphalt lift raised the road level and there were sections that needed work

anyway, we had to work the bar ditches to build the shoulders to make the roads safer and eliminate steeper drop offs in a number of areas along the three projects.

This time of year we trim the trees back that overhang the roadway. This increases the visibility and makes the rural roads safer to drive. This also makes the trees look ugly, but doing it in the spring time, the trees will soon bud out and look better.

The truss bridge on old State Highway 36 east of Faxon was found to be structurally deficient for the weight limit during the last inspection. Since this bridge was seldom used, rather than spend money on it we chose to close the bridge.

The heavy rains this past spring caused a large amount of debris to wash against the pilings on the Sandy Creek Bridge west of Indianahoma. The debris forced the strong current against the back wall causing a considerable amount of dirt to wash out that had to be replaced to preserve the integrity of the bridge.

Kenny and I met with Adrian Tehauno and Theo Niedo with the Comanche Nation Transportation Department to review the roads that they wanted to provide material for out of their highway funds. We have agreed on 11 miles of oil and chip roads and about 4 miles of asphalt overlay. We are currently having the required engineering done by CEC Engineering Company.

This month we will take delivery on a new John Deere backhoe and a front end loader. They will replace ones that are about 20 years old and are worn out.

After the overlay was placed on H Ave. in Cache three vehicles ran off the cross drain culvert at the 4-way stop at H and 115. Coordinating with the Mayor of Cache, we put up four flexible reflective pipes to make the drop off more visible, particularly at night. This has seemed to help since no one has run off since this was done.

In conjunction with our continuing safety training a CPR class was given to the Comanche County District 3 work force.

Dennis Long retired from the District 3 work force having worked a total of 38 years. Dennis's primary responsibility was operating a motor grader. However, when called upon he ran other equipment as needed to maintain roads in the western portion of Comanche County. We want to again thank him for his dedication and commitment to the County and wish him the best in his retirement.

On February 26, I announced that I was not going to seek a third term. It was with mixed emotions that I made this decision. My time as Commissioner has been a rewarding experience. I have gained a deeper understanding of building and maintaining roads and bridges and a greater appreciation for county government. My term will end December 31, 2018.

If you have questions or concerns, I can be contacted at don.hawthorne@comanchecounty.us or you may phone the County Barn at 580-429-3217 or the Courthouse office at 580-353-3717.