

Portage County
Highway Department



800 Plover Road
Plover, WI 54467

Nathan Check, PE
Commissioner

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April 16, 2020 - WORK ZONE SAFETY AWARENESS WEEK NEWS RELEASE – For release on or prior to April 20, 2020

Portage County Officials Remind Drivers to Drive Safe in Work Zones this Construction Season

At their March meeting, the Portage County Board of Supervisors declared April 20th to April 24th as Work Zone Awareness Week for the County. This coincides with the national event which is sponsored by federal, state and local transportation officials each April in an effort to draw attention to the safety needs of road workers during construction season.

Preliminary figures from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation show that there were more than 2,400 work zone crashes throughout Wisconsin last year. This preliminary data included 899 injuries and 18 fatalities from work zone related crashes. In order to prevent these accidents, Portage County officials urge people to drive carefully in highway work zones as the start of maintenance and construction season begins throughout Wisconsin. As the weather turns, work zones will be more prevalent putting more highway workers and drivers at risk. Generally, crashes occur when drivers speed through a work zone, do not pay attention to changing road conditions, run into other vehicles or highway equipment, or drive off the road completely.

In Wisconsin, work zones include maintenance jobs such as crack-filling and pothole repair as well as major highway construction and rehabilitation. While these types of work zones are prevalent throughout the county and state, there are also a significant number of maintenance and emergency operations that may be short-term or moving operations. Drivers are reminded of the state's "Move Over, Slow Down" law which requires drivers to shift lanes or slow down in order to provide a "safety zone" for a squad car, ambulance, fire truck, tow truck, utility vehicle, or highway maintenance vehicle that is stopped on the side of a road with its warning lights flashing. These work zones can include daily maintenance, emergency vehicle stops, utility work, and even garbage pick-up.

In addition, drivers are reminded that it is illegal to talk on a hand-held mobile device while driving through a work zone. Violators face fines of up to \$40 on first offense and \$100 for subsequent offenses, plus costs. The Portage County Highway Department reminds motorists that following the law is simple: "Just remember: Orange cones – Put down the phones!"

Portage County Highway Department has another busy year of maintenance and construction projects planned throughout this year. Motorists can expect speed limit reductions on many of the county's construction and maintenance projects. A summary of the major County projects are highlighted below:

County Engineer – Dean Schmitz
County Patrol Manager – Kory Kukuczka State Patrol Manager – Todd Makuski
Parts Room / Shop Manager – Corey Giese Assistant Patrol Supervisor – Bob Lang
Finance Office Supervisor – Stacy Zerby Financial Associate III – Kristen Hancock

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Project: CTH KK (Lake Drive to CTH A) Reconstruction

Project Description: This project involves the reconstruction of 3.3 miles of CTH KK (Old USH 10) in the Town of Amherst, Village of Amherst Junction and Village of Amherst. It consists of removing the existing asphalt pavement, breaking the existing concrete pavement and placing a new asphalt pavement section over the existing concrete. The intersection at Western Way / Wilson Street and the intersection at Main Street will be reconstructed to improve safety, drainage and future maintenance. The existing horizontal & vertical alignments and existing ditching will have minimal changes.

CTH KK will be closed to through traffic throughout construction. Access will be provided to adjacent residences and businesses as well as emergency vehicles during construction, but all other traffic shall utilize alternate routes.

Estimated Construction Date: Anticipated start date is late April with completion in mid-September. The project will be broken into two stages with the CTH KK and Western Way / Wilson Street Intersection starting in late April and will have asphalt pavement placed by early July (prior to the Amherst Fair). Work on the sections to the east and west of this intersection will follow and all work is anticipated to be complete in September.

Project: CTH SS (High Street to CTH T) Resurfacing

Project Description: This project involves 2.5 miles of CTH SS from High Street in Nelsonville to CTH T in the Town of Amherst. It consists of resurfacing the existing roadway which includes pulverizing the existing pavement, grading, replacing culverts, asphalt paving, gravel shouldering, pavement markings and sign replacements as needed.

CTH SS will be closed to through traffic throughout construction. Access will be provided to adjacent residences and businesses as well as emergency vehicles during construction, but all other traffic shall utilize alternate routes.

Estimated Construction Date: Anticipated start date is September 2020.

Project: 2020 Crackfilling and Chip Sealing

Project Description: Approximately 50 miles of county highways are planned to be crackfilled and chip sealed. Deficient culverts will be replaced, cracks will be filled with rubber crack filler. Road repairs will be wedged with asphalt prior to the chip seal process. New pavement markings will be installed. A map of the road is provided on the Highway Department's website.

A majority of these roads will remain open to local traffic during chipsealing and sweeping with reduced speed limits. Traffic is encouraged to utilize alternate routes until all roads are swept.

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Estimated Construction Date: Anticipated start date is May 2020 for culvert replacements and crackfilling and July for chipsealing.

Additional information on specific projects can be found on their website at <http://www.co.portage.wi.us/highway/>.. Any questions may be directed to the Portage County Highway Department at 715-345-5230. The Portage County Highway Department workers and their families thank you in advance for slowing down and driving attentively through our work zones.

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