

Road Report

A publication of the Road Commission for Oakland County for public officials serving Oakland County

www.rcocweb.org

LaLonde remains RCOC chair, Quarles remains vice chair; McPherson is new road commissioner

For 2023, Andrea LaLonde will remain the chair of the Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) Board of Road Commissioners, while Nancy Quarles will remain the vice chair. Additionally, Eric McPherson has been appointed the third member of the Board, replacing Ron Fowkes, who retired in December.

"I am honored to continue to serve the residents of Oakland County in this capacity," LaLonde stated. "I am proud of all the work the Road Commission accomplished in the last year, and I look forward to continuing that forward progress in 2023." LaLonde was first elected RCOC chair in 2021 and has served on the Board since 2019.

Quarles, in her third year on the Board, also expressed her desire to continue to work to improve the county's roads. "This past year, this agency made great progress

on improving the roads in Oakland County," she stated. "We are absolutely committed to keeping that momentum going for the coming year."

RCOC commissioners are appointed for staggered six-year terms by the Oakland County Board of Commissioners. The County Board appointed McPherson in January.

RCOC is a separate unit of government and is not funded by the County Board. Rather, RCOC receives the bulk of its funding from the state in the form of fuel-tax and vehicle-registration-fee revenues.



The RCOC Board (left to right): Andrea LaLonde, Nancy Quarles and Eric D. McPherson.

Chair LaLonde is a resident of Clawson. She is an employee of Pangea in Rochester Hills, where she is executive coordination manager, and is a graduate of Kalamazoo College.

In what may be a first in Michigan, Chair LaLonde is not the only member of her family to chair a Michigan county road

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RCOC adds graphic elements to bridges to reflect community, context

Motorists, pedestrians and even kayakers or canoers may have noticed something different on bridges along Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) roads in recent years – the addition of decorative, or in some cases, even artistic features in some of the concrete portions of the structures.

In some cases, this takes the form of replicating brick or stone facing on the bridges. In others, such as the Hatchery Road bridge over the Clinton River in Waterford Township, it involves including the fish-shaped emblem associated with the adjacent Fish Hatchery Park.

"We always ask the community if there is a theme or specific pattern they would like to see that we can do cost effectively and that will make the structure fit into the community a bit more," explained RCOC Design Engineer Jeff



The Hatchery Road bridge over the Clinton River in Waterford Township includes this fish design.

O'Brien. "We try to be conscious of where the structure is being placed and its surrounding environment."

The designs are created using "formliners" which are inserted in the cement forms. A variety of generic form liners are available which can replicate brick or

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ROAD COMMISSION
for OAKLAND COUNTY

RCOC staff update:

Campbell, Martin named new superintendents of RCOC Orion, Troy garages

New superintendents have been assigned to the Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) garages serving the northeastern and southeastern parts of the county.

The superintendents, along with their foremen, typically interact frequently with the local officials in the communities served by their garages.

The northeastern part of the county — including the townships of Orion, Oakland, Addison, Oxford and Brandon (and a sliver of Groveland), and the cities/villages of Oxford, Lake Orion, Leonard, Ortonville, Auburn Hills and parts of Rochester, Rochester Hills and Lake Angelus — is served by the RCOC garage in Orion Township.

The southeastern part of the county is served by RCOC's garage located in Troy. This district covers the cities/villages of: Troy, Clawson, Royal Oak, Berkley, Madison Heights, Oak Park, Hazel Park, Huntington Woods, Pleasant Ridge and Ferndale and parts of Birmingham, Rochester and Rochester Hills as well as Royal Oak Township.

The new superintendent at the Orion garage is Colin Campbell. The new superintendent in the Troy garage is Bode Martin. Both Campbell and Martin are RCOC veterans, and each was a foreman at several RCOC garages before being promoted to superintendent.

As superintendents, both are responsible for maintenance of all the county roads within their districts as well for maintaining the state highways, under the jurisdiction of the Michigan Department



Colin Campbell, left, is the new superintendent of the Orion garage. Bode Martin, right, is the new superintendent of the Troy garage.



of Transportation (MDOT) within the garages' districts. RCOC is contracted by MDOT to maintain most of its roads in the county, which includes all routine maintenance such as plowing and salting, pothole patching, litter pickup up, etc.

The state highways are all roads with an I, M or US in the name, such as I-75, M-59 or US-24.

Both Campbell and Martin were promoted to superintendent in December. Prior to that, Campbell had been a foreman at the Orion garage and, before that, a foreman at the Troy garage. In all, he has nine years with the Road Commission, having started as a temporary worker in the Troy garage. In the intervening years, he served as a laborer, grade person, skilled laborer, tandem driver, excavator operator and worked on the asphalt crew.

For his part, Martin is a 16-year RCOC employee. Prior to his promotion to superintendent, he was the superintendent in training in the Highway Maintenance Department. Prior to that, he served as foreman in several RCOC garages, though he got his start with the agency as a laborer and held a variety of positions before his promotion to foreman.

During that time, Martin operated most of the heavy equipment in RCOC's arsenal, including road graders, chloride tankers and, of course, the ubiquitous orange dump trucks that are the workhorses of the fleet.

Fun Fact

As of Feb. 12, the Road Commission had used 32,131 tons of salt this winter — about 20,000 tons less than last year.

BOARD — CONT'D FROM FRONT commission. Her father, Timothy LaLonde, serves on the St. Clair County Road Commission and is currently that board's chair.

Quarles has a PhD in public administration and public affairs from Western Michigan University. She served in the Michigan House of Representatives from 1996 to 2002 and on the Oakland County Board of Commissioners from 1995 to 1996 and again from 2011 to 2020. She is a resident of Novi and a faculty member at Central Michigan University.

Quarles also serves as RCOC's representative to the Oakland County Parks Commission.

McPherson is a life-long resident of Hazel Park and a business agent for the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers (SMART) Local 80, where he has been a member for 37 years. He has been a business representative for the organization for 17 years, is a trustee of the Local's Insurance Fund, is a building trades journeyman, has completed continuing education classes in upgrading labor, is a trustee of the Michigan Maritime Trades Port Council and is chair of the Oakland County Building Authority. He is a 1983 graduate of Catholic Central High School.

"I would like to thank the Oakland

County Board of Commissioners for my appointment to the Road Commission Board," McPherson said. "My goal is to continue to promote the national reputation of this Board and organization for its superior road operations. I recognize that credit needs to be given to the staff and laborers who make this happen.

"I look forward to being part of this organization," he added. "I come from a background of labor and blue-collar workers and welcome the opportunity for new policy-making habits that work for labor, management, residents and users of the roads," McPherson stated. "Safe roads and looking for new ways of funding the roads must remain priorities."

Road Commission's Real-Time Traffic Map updated on website

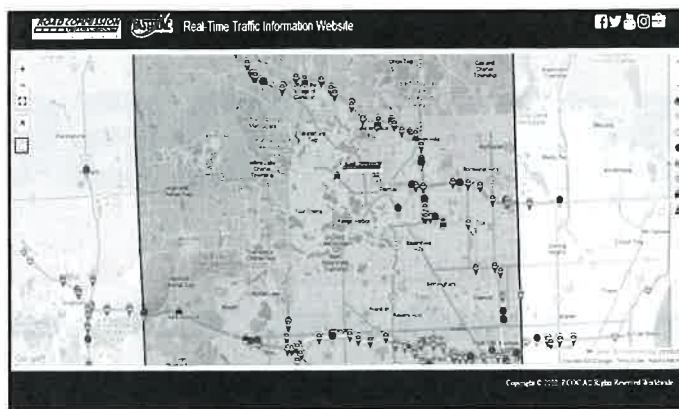
The Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) has updated the Real-Time Traffic Map on its website, which provides real-time information about traffic congestion levels in the county as well as links to cameras along roads and freeways around the county and much more.

The Real-Time Traffic Map is accessible via the RCOC website, www.rcocweb.org – simply click on the “Real-Time Traffic” button on the homepage of the site.

“RCOC was the first local road agency in the nation to create a map to share its traffic-congestion data with the public, and we are always looking for ways to improve the map,” stated RCOC Managing Director Dennis Kolar. “This latest version of the map continues that process by providing even more information for users and making the information even easier to use.”

The map provides easy-to-see color-coded congestion level information for many RCOC roads. The congestion data is provided via RCOC’s high-tech FAST-TRAC (Faster And Safer Travel Through Routing and Advanced Controls) traffic-signal system.

FAST-TRAC is an “adaptive” traffic-signal system which continuously detects the number of vehicles present at the traffic signals and uses computer algorithms to adjust traffic-signal timing in real time to most efficiently move vehicles through the intersections and along corridors. The system also determines



congestion levels based on the number of vehicles present and feeds that information to the Real-Time Traffic Map.

The map uses the data to color code roads to show congestion levels – green means free flowing, orange is somewhat congested, and red is congested.

Also on the map are clickable camera icons. When clicked, the icons bring up photos of the current conditions on the roads. There are

more than 200 cameras available through the site. Currently, the cameras are primarily on freeways (under the jurisdiction of the Michigan Department of Transportation, or MDOT), but additional cameras on RCOC roads will be added to the site in the near future.

The map also provides clickable road-construction and incident icons which both show where construction is taking place or where there are incidents, such as crashes, on the roads and, when clicked, provide information about the road project or incident.

New to the site is information about electric vehicle (EV) charging stations located in Oakland County, which are also indicated by icons on the map. Also new is a layer that can be turned on by users that shows the current National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather information for the region.

The map allows users to choose between a generic base map and the Google base map which also shows the locations of businesses, parks, park-and-ride lots and other destinations.

BRIDGE — CONT'D FROM FRONT

stonework or other traditional building materials. In cases like the Hatchery bridge, RCOC included as part of the project a custom-made form to generate a more unique appearance.

For the Hatchery bridge, O'Brien noted RCOC staff met with the Waterford Historical Society which operates out of Fish Hatchery Park adjacent to the bridge. “The Historical Society members remembered how, many years ago, when the Road Commission built the previous bridge, the community was not consulted and they felt the bridge was not very compatible with the community. They appreciated that we sat down with them this time and created the custom formliner with their logo. They were very happy with the end result.”

In addition to the Hatchery bridge, recent examples where RCOC has worked with the community to add a design to the concrete elements of a bridge include the Maloney Street bridge in Oxford Township, the Avon Road bridge over the Clinton River in Rochester Hills and the Wixom Road bridge over the Huron River on the Commerce Township/Milford



The Avon Rd. bridge over the Clinton River (left) includes graphic elements depicting waves and grasses, while the Wixom Rd. bridge over the Clinton River is made to appear to resemble stonework.



Township border.

On the Maloney bridge, which is in the middle of a neighborhood, a design resembling a stone wall was added to the railing that runs along the bridge to match the structure’s retaining wall texture. For the Avon Road bridge, designs resembling both waves and natural grasses were added to the bridge.

The Wixom Road bridge, which is in the middle of the Proud Lake State Recreation Area, also received a stone-like treatment to better blend in with the natural vistas around it.

“These decorative elements haven’t really moved the needle on the cost of the projects, and they provide a nicer asset when we are done,” O’Brien said.

ROAD COMMISSION

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Coalition warns of loss of road funding due to EVs

A coalition of Michigan organizations recently commissioned a study that paints a grim picture of Michigan's road-funding future if the state does not ensure that the quickly proliferating fleet of electric vehicles in the state pays its fair share for using the roads.

The coalition members are: the County Road Association of Michigan (CRA – representing Michigan's 83 county road agencies), the Michigan Infrastructure and Transportation Association (MITA – representing road and underground contractors), the Michigan Public Transit Association (MPTA), the Michigan Association of Counties (MAC), the Michigan Municipal League (MML), the Michigan Townships Association (MTA) and the Michigan Chamber of Commerce.

The coalition commissioned the Anderson Economic Group (AEG) to conduct the study. The report, "The Impact of EV Adoption on Road Funding in Michigan," was published in January.

The report notes that in 2021, 6 percent of all new vehicles registered in Michigan were electric, while EVs made up about 2 percent off all vehicles on Michigan roads at the time. It also notes that all the major auto manufacturers have pledged to dramatically increase EV production by 2030.

Currently, EV drivers in Michigan pay 70 to 80 percent of what internal-

combustion-engine-vehicle owners pay in taxes that fund the state's roads.

As a result, the report says, EVs using Michigan's roads cost the state \$50 million in transportation funding from 2019 to 2021. By 2030, the report predicts, Michigan will see an annual road-funding shortfall of \$65 million to \$90 million caused by EVs, or a cumulative road funding reduction of \$390 million to \$470 million.

CRA estimates that lost funding will equate to 2,350 fewer miles of roads resurfaced across the state by 2030 as a result of the lost revenue.

Unfortunately, this comes at a time when Michigan roads are already facing challenges. Much of that is the result of the fact that Michigan road funding was stagnant from 1997 through 2016. Even after the 2017 state road-funding increase (the result of 2015 legislative action that raised the state's gas and diesel taxes and eventually directed \$600 million annually of state General Fund dollars to roads), by 2021, only 26 percent of roads across the state that are eligible for federal road funding were in good condition, while 38 percent were in fair condition and 36 percent were in poor condition.

What's the solution? CRA urges the state Legislature and governor to address this impending disaster immediately. "The problem of underpayment of road funding by EVs is in its infancy," the association warns.

Contacting RCOC

If your constituents need information about a road project or want to report a pothole, traffic-signal concern or other road issue, they should call RCOC's **Department of Customer Services** toll free at:

(877) 858-4804

OR

**Fill out a report via the
RCOC Web site:
www.rcocweb.org**

ROAD REPORT

Road Report is published quarterly by the Road Commission for Oakland County. Have a question or comment about **Road Report**? Call Senior Communications Manager Craig Bryson at (248) 645-2000, ext. 2202.

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