

Road Report

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

www.rcocweb.org

Road agencies, communities show up at funeral to honor RCOC employee killed in tragic workzone crash

An amazing show of support took place during the Aug. 2 funeral for Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) employee Cedric Jones: In addition to RCOC, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), 13 other county road agencies and 10 municipalities sent staff and trucks to the event.

Jones was killed July 23 while on the job, working on Orchard Lake Road in Farmington Hills, when a motorist crossed the Orchard Lake median and hit the RCOC crew. RCOC employees Robert Dinkins and George Thomas were seriously injured in the incident.

"This event was a terrible tragedy. Words cannot express my thoughts for Mr. Jones' family," stated RCOC Managing Director Dennis Kolar. "The show of support at the funeral was amazing, and I hope that helped convey



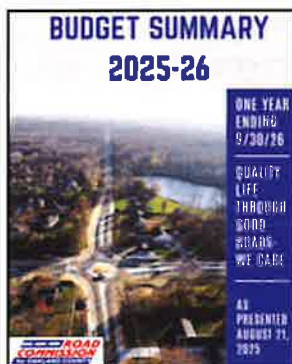
Drone photos show the trucks lined up hours before the service started at Second Ebenezer Baptist Church in Detroit.

RCOC 2026 budget comes in at \$193.4 million

The Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) Board was expected to approve the agency's \$193.4 million fiscal year 2026 budget on Sept. 25.

The budget represents about a \$15.7 million increase from the 2025 budget of \$177.7 million. The 2026 budget increase is primarily due to increases in federal road funds, state road funding and local government contributions.

The proposed budget is available to review on the RCOC website, www.rcocweb.org (click on the "Financials" button on the home page, select the "RCOC Budget Summary" item and click on "2025-26 Budget").



The federal funding level and the contributions from local communities fluctuate from year to year depending on the type and number of road projects conducted.

RCOC anticipates an increase in its largest source of revenue — state road funds generated by the state fuel taxes, vehicle-registration fees and income tax — for

the coming year. The agency expects to receive about \$132 million in state road funding in fiscal year 2026, up from the \$122.3 million budgeted in 2025 and that has remained stagnant since 2022.

The state dollars are RCOC's main funding source for operations.

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RCOC managing director hits 40-year milestone with agency

For many of us, racking up one, five, 10 or 20 years at the same employer may seem daunting. But Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) Managing Director Dennis Kolar was just getting started at 20 years.

On June 26, the RCOC Board recognized Kolar's 40th anniversary at the agency. He started in 1985 after six years with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT).

As a point of reference, some noteworthy events happening in 1985, in addition to Kolar's hiring by RCOC, included President Ronald Reagan's second-term inauguration, the Live Aid concert to address famine in Ethiopia and the release of the "We Are the World" song, the release of Microsoft Windows 1.0, Mikhail Gorbachev was named the new leader of the Soviet Union (yes, the Soviet Union still existed), the domain-name system for the internet was created, Coca-Cola released the ill-fated "New Coke" and

DNA was used for the first time to help solve a criminal case.

Meanwhile, back in Beverly Hills, Michigan, Kolar, a graduate of Lawrence Technological University with a degree in civil engineering, was hired as a civil engineer (CE) I. While it took him the next 27 years to make it to the managing director's office, Kolar filled a number of other roles en route to the top spot.

Those positions included CE II, CE III, design engineer (head of the Design Division of the Engineering Department), maintenance operations engineer in the Highway Maintenance Department, director of the Central Operations Department, Director of the Highway Maintenance Department, deputy managing director and, finally, in 2012, managing director.

In honor of his reaching the 40-year milestone, the RCOC Board presented



RCOC Board Chairman Eric McPherson, left, and Vice Chair James Esshaki, right, present Kolar with the resolution of tribute.

Kolar with a resolution of tribute, recognizing his numerous contributions to the agency over four decades. In addition to noting his history with the agency, the resolution notes that Kolar is highly respected among RCOC's peer agencies and is frequently called upon statewide for his expertise.

BUDGET — CONT'D FROM FRONT

RCOC anticipates receiving \$28.3 million in federal funding in FY 2026 (compared to \$28.2 million for the current year), \$800,000 in interest revenue (no change from the current year) and \$11.6 million in local government contributions (compared to \$10.1 million for the current year).

The remaining revenue making up the budget comes from RCOC's contract with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to maintain state highways in the county (\$14 million, up slightly from the current year) and fees and other revenues (\$2.8 million, about the same as received for the current year).

The 2026 budget includes nearly \$62 million in annual contributions toward

safety-focused road-improvement projects to be constructed in 2026 and future years (this is not the total cost for these projects - some costs were included in the current year's budget or will be included in the 2027 budget where projects were expected to be carried over from 2025 into 2026 or will be carried over from 2026 into 2027); \$38.1 million for road maintenance efforts such as pothole patching, gravel road grading and salting and plowing in the winter; and \$18.1 million for maintaining traffic signs, signals, pavement markings and guardrails among other activities.

The remainder of the budget is dedicated to operating expenses, including customer services, vehicle maintenance, staff wages, buildings and grounds and administration.

"The 2026 budget is more than just numbers -- it's a step toward better, safer roads," noted RCOC Board Chair Eric McPherson. "We're not just maintaining what we have; we are building a future-ready road network that supports Oakland County's growth and prosperity," McPherson added.

RCOC Vice Chair James Esshaki concurred. "The proposed budget reflects a continued focus on fiscal accountability and transparency while supporting road and safety needs across the county."

Managing Director Dennis Kolar agreed. "Everything we do starts with safety," he noted. "And this budget puts that commitment front and center."

The complete list of 2026 road projects included in the budget is on page 3.

TRUCKS — CONT'D FROM FRONT

to the family how many people are thinking about them."

RCOC sent nine trucks to the funeral.

At the funeral, all the trucks lined up in the church's parking lot, and then, after the service, the trucks lined the street outside the church, and all the drivers and staff members stood beside their trucks, hands on their hearts, as a sign of respect as the hearse and the family's vehicles drove by.

"I was very impressed by the outpouring of support by our staff and the staff

members of all the other agencies and municipalities that participated," Kolar said, noting that all those in attendance volunteered their time to be there.

Many of the organizations represented sent multiple trucks to the event, resulting in more than 45 total road-agency or municipal vehicles in the procession that joined Jones' hearse and family vehicles following the funeral.

In addition to RCOC and MDOT, the county road agencies represented at the event were from the following counties: Berrien, Genesee, Ionia, Kalamazoo,

Kent, Lapeer, Livingston, Macomb, Montcalm, Muskegon, Washtenaw, Wayne and Van Buren.

The cities and townships participating were: Ann Arbor, Bloomfield Township, Detroit, Farmington, Farmington Hills, Grand Rapids, Kentwood, Rochester Hills, Walker and Wyoming.

"Thank you to all those agencies and municipalities that joined us in honoring Cedric Jones," Kolar stated. "We were humbled by the incredible outpouring of support. I'm sure Mr. Jones' family was very moved."

2026 RCOC Road Improvement Program (RIP)

Below is the 2026 Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) Road Improvement Program (RIP) list of projects to be constructed in 2026. The project costs listed are the estimated contractor payments for the projects and do not include costs such as right of way acquisition, preliminary engineering and construction engineering.

Repair, Rehabilitate & Resurface (repair road base and add 3 to 4 inches of new asphalt)

• 12 Mile Road, Orchard Lake to Autumn Ridge in Farmington Hills	\$ 3.8 million
• 12 Mile Road, Novi to Farmington in Novi and Farmington Hills	\$ 8.5 million
• Greenfield Road, Lincoln to 12 Mile in Southfield, Berkley and Oak Park	\$ 4 million
• Novi Road, 8 Mile to 9 Mile (two-year project started in 2025) in Novi and Northville	\$ 4.35 million
• Pontiac Trail, 9 Mile to the CSX railroad tracks in South Lyon and Lyon Twp.	\$ 11.6 million

Intersection Improvement

• Wixom/Duck Lake/Sleeth intersection (construct roundabout) in Milford and Commerce townships	\$ 2.7 million
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Pave Gravel

• Pontiac Lake Road, Margie to Kingston in White Lake Twp.	\$3.5 million
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Bridge Replacements

• Deerhill Street over Deer Lake Creek in Independence Twp.	\$ 1.8 million
• Edgemoor Street over the Clinton River in Waterford Twp.	
• Emburke Street over the Clinton River in Waterford Twp. (removing existing bridge and replacing with pedestrian bridge; Edgemoor and Emburke bridges will be bid as one project)	\$ 3.3 million

Bridge Rehabilitations

• 14 Mile Road over the Rouge River in Franklin and Bloomfield Twp.	
• Franklin Road over the Rouge River in Franklin and Bloomfield Twp.	
• Inkster Road over the Rouge River in Bloomfield Twp. and West Bloomfield Twp. (all three bid as one project)	\$ 3.2 million

Culverts

• 10 Mile Road over the Rouge River in Farmington Hills	\$ 1.5 million
• Avonlea Street over the Huron River in White Lake Twp.	\$ 2.2 million
• Heatherwood Street over the Huron River in Commerce Twp.	\$ 1.1 million
• Walnut Lake Road over the Rouge River in West Bloomfield Twp.	\$ 1.3 million

Total annual estimated construction costs for projects to be constructed in 2026: **\$52,850,000**

Work zone cameras provide public with real-time views of two Road Commission culvert-replacement projects

Anyone interested can now watch the status of two ongoing Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) culvert-replacement projects through real-time work zone cameras: Pontiac Trail just west of Old Wixom Road in Wixom and Wise Road over the Huron River in Commerce Township.

The cameras take photos of the projects every 15 minutes from approximately 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Contractor crews are expected to work on the projects most days, excluding during inclement weather and Sundays.

Viewers can follow the construction progress on the RCOC website (www.rcocweb.org). Click on the "Road Projects" icon on the website home-page and scroll down to Road Construction Cameras to find the links to the cameras. Site visitors can view project photos or time-lapse series that combine all



The view of the Wise Road culvert project from the work zone camera.

images taken in succession.

RCOC will produce a compilation of all photos after the projects are completed.

31001 Lahser Road
Beverly Hills, MI 48025



Water continued to pour over the road following the July 16 torrential rainfall washed out a portion of the road.

Severe July flooding washed out part of Orion Road; road now repaired and re-opened

The Rochester Hills and Oakland Township area breathed a collective sigh of relieve on Aug. 18, when the Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) reopened Orion Road at Dutton Road on the border of the two communities following emergency repairs after part of the road was washed away in flooding on July 16.

The flooding also damaged three utility services buried in the area washed away. To re-open the road, RCOC had to backfill the large area washed away and then repair the road. The utility companies had to replace their services in the washed out area, including a gas line, water line and fiber optic line.

As part of its emergency work at the site, RCOC repaired a culvert under the road and backfilled the area washed away by the flooding. The repaired section was repaved, new guardrail installed and new pavement markings were placed. In all, the emergency

work cost RCOC an estimated \$165,000.

The road was reopened as soon as the utility work and additional minor road repairs (the result of utility cuts in the pavement necessary for the work) were completed.

"We appreciate the public's patience as we worked to make the emergency repairs to this road following the unexpected flooding," RCOC Managing Director Dennis Kolar stated. "We know this was an inconvenience, and we and the utility companies did everything we could to get the work done as quickly as possible."

The flooding was caused by the record rainfall in the area on July 16, which was considered a 200-year rain event, meaning the area is expected to see that much rain in that amount of time only every 200 years or so. Other parts of the county and region received far less rain on July 16.

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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Deputy Managing Director/
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