

OCEANA COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION

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Wednesday, April 22, 2009

News release – **Big Loads Damage Roads**

It is quite apparent in Oceana County that nature's fury wreaks havoc on the roads. The annual temperature swings of over 110 degrees from deep winter to late summer cause extreme amounts of expansion & contraction of our roads. Freeze thaw cycles cause any trapped water to expand, and then when melted, the voids left behind from the ice weaken the structure. Rain which seeps into gravel & sand bases softens them and then those bases lose stability and strength. During seasonal weight restrictions, the frost in the ground prevents any accumulated water in the base or sub-base from naturally draining away, making the roads even more unstable and easily damaged.

Yes, nature is hard on the roads in Oceana County, and we cannot control that. However, heavy loads are even harder on the roads. Gravel, sand, lumber, farm produce, animal waste, etc, all take their toll on our roads. Most of the roads in Oceana County were not built for heavy loads. When subjected to heavy loads, the roads deflect and deform. While slowing down the vehicle helps the pavement withstand the load, by deflecting more slowly, it does not stop the deflection from taking place. Aged asphalt is more brittle than new. Most old roads have surfaces that are not elastic enough to fully recover when the load is removed. Cracks form, and those cracks spread with each successive loading. Eventually, with repeated loading, the cracking causes the pavement to completely lose its integrity and road failure results. These failures can be very dangerous to both the motoring public and the adjacent land owners. Loose pieces of pavement can fly from the road and land on adjacent property, causing problems for the land owners.

We at the Oceana County Road Commission strive for the best roads possible with the limited budget we have been given. You can help make our dollars go farther. We need your help in keeping our roads safe and in good shape. Please do not overload. Drive slowly when hauling any load. If possible, do not haul loads for a few days after a rain. Lastly, do not haul any heavy loads during the spring weight restriction season.

Remember – Big loads damage roads.