

The Tribune

County roads, bridges prioritized

By Staff reports

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BATH — Steuben County continues to be a leader in the state in highway conditions, with a notable reduction in poor roads and deficient bridges in 2018, and a significant upswing in road conditions during the past two decades.

County Public Works Commissioner Vince Spagnoletti said the number miles of poor roads in Steuben was cut in half last year, dropping the number of poor miles from 41 miles to 20 miles and down 100 miles from the 1998 report of 120 poor road miles.

The reduction leaves only three percent of county roads in poor shape in 2019, compared to the state's poor roads average of 28 percent, reported by the state Department of Transportation.

Crack sealing, chip and slurry seal projects repaired 63 county miles last year, with more extensive work, such as recycling and blacktop on 45 county miles. Steuben ranks third in the state with 683 miles of county roads.

Steuben Public Works uses a road condition system developed by Cornell University, the Road Surface Management System which looks at a number of factors including local traffic, roughness and rutting.

The road division is overseen by Deputy Commissioner Doug Rapalee.

Bridges in the county, under Engineer Steve Catherman, also have shown a sharp decline in deficiency during the past 26 years, from roughly 40 percent down to 17 percent, Spagnoletti reported. Statewide, 34 percent of bridges are deficient according to the DOT.

Work on four major county bridges, all located across the Canisteo River, is planned from 2019 through 2021 and will draw nearly \$12 million in federal and state funds.

Spagnoletti credited the funding efforts of state Assemblyman Phil Palmesano, R-Corning, state Senator Tom O'Mara and Gov. Andrew Cuomo for the department's ability to improve road and bridge conditions.

"And our county legislators," he said. "I've been fortunate. I've always been able to go to them with the good, the bad and the ugly about road and bridge conditions. They want to know. They want their roads fixed."

Other county Public Works accomplishments in 2018 include:

Completion of landfill Cell 4, and purchase of property to the east of the landfill for future use.

Sale of carbon credits for the methane gas flare system at the landfill.

Improved access for people with mobility issues at all county parks, including better pathways and new pavilions in Harley Mayo Park in Boyd's Corners and Hornby Park.

Fourteen work-related courses for Mobile Work Program participants.