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Also:
2005 Meetings & Workshops
2005 Maintenance Workshop

Happy Holidays

2-day Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance Training Policy
After thorough review and evaluation, the Education and Outreach Advisory Workgroup has recommended to the Dirt and Gravel Road Program a requirement for all townships to meet a 5-year renewal of Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance (ESM) training completion. Also, the workgroup recommended that employee(s) involved in the program and at least one (1) of two (2) Quality Assurance Board (QAB) members from the district complete the “once every 5 years” ESM training requirement. In 2005, those affected are township representatives who have taken ESM training prior to 2000 and DGRP staff or QAB members at the district who haven’t completed ESM training. Action on the policy recommendations is expected at the January meeting of the State Conservation Commission.

To handle the increased demand for ESM, two (2) regional trainings are currently being scheduled (see below) and possibly two (2) others to be announced:
Dauphin Regional Training (includes Dauphin, Perry, Snyder, Northumberland, Schuylkill, Lebanon, Lancaster, & York Counties) in March 2005;

Please see the calendar on page 4 for the current schedule of 2005 ESM trainings.

Meet Dave Shearer!
We are happy to welcome Dave Shearer as the newest member of our team at the center!

Dave graduated from Juniata College with a degree in geology. He worked for 23 years as a geologist and project manager for a small surface mining concern based out of Cambria County. During his tenure there Dave managed the permitting and environmental aspects of the company. He also designed and implemented several acid mine drainage abatement systems.

Dave joins us now as a field operations specialist. He has jumped in to work at the center and is learning fast. When not at work, Dave enjoys mountain biking and is a basketball fan.

We are very excited to have Dave on board!
Correction

In our last issue in the Driving Surface Aggregate (DSA) Certification article we stated that the raised embossed seal of a notary was required on DSA certifications. The raised embossed seal is no longer required. The new seal is a Commonwealth of Pennsylvania stamp showing the name of the notary, municipality, county and date their commission expires. Please note that dated notarization is still required for all DSA certifications.

One of the reasons Pennsylvania is so beautiful every fall is the diverse coloration our landscape takes from the changing of the leaves. This seasonal occurrence ends with the rhythmic falling of the leaves to the ground. The earth is soon blanketed in a soft fluff of fresh ground cover. Many find autumn peaceful and even romantic. But there are those of us, especially the people here at the Center for Dirt and Gravel Road Studies, who anticipate this annual ecological event like we might welcome the beginning of a Steven King movie marathon.

Why, you ask, would anyone take such a dire view of something so natural? It starts with Driving Surface Aggregate (DSA). Because we endorse the use of pavers to place DSA, most of our aggregate placement occurs at the end of asphalt season. Asphalt season ends in the fall, often as late as October, the same time the leaves are gently covering the roads.

So what's the big deal? Some of you found out this year with back to back to back hurricanes. If we cover these leaves with six inches of fresh aggregate, they will slowly decompose creating a thin slimy slip plane for your DSA to slide on. This problem is especially worrisome when the whole road surface has a few inches of leaves distributed over it. Well...just blow the leaves of the road, right? Here is where the Steven King movie marathon comparison comes in. You arrive on site at 7:00 am. There are twenty trucks lined up and down the busiest road in the county. The paver is sitting idle, which is never anticipated this annual ecological event like we might welcome the beginning of a Steven King movie marathon.

I have never met a contractor that carries a leaf blower on the paver. I have only met one township that has one and uses it for this reason. Besides, ask yourself if you want to get in between all those trucks and the paver with your backpack blower frantically trying to move 2000 feet of leaves from one side of the road to the other. I sure wouldn't.

So how can you avoid this horror? Plan for it. We know that most of our aggregate is going to be placed in the fall, often as late as October, the same time the leaves are gently covering the roads. You immediately start wondering how bad can it be? Is that a clown over in the bushes with a big knife? I sure wouldn't.

As for the tons of bank material saved, think about all the grading of ditches that occurs with the sole purpose of removing leaves. When the leaves can be blown away from the ditch, none of this earth needs to be disturbed.

Be advised—there is a better way. There is tool that not only can do this job with ease but could save tens of thousands of tons of bank material as well. No, this is not a beam of light from outer space, or even a secret government device. It is a 3-point hitch leaf blower. The very same one used by golf courses around the world. This simple tool is the most overlooked implement by township government. Simple to use, relatively inexpensive, and requires no manual labor. Sounds like a win, win, win, to me. This device makes short work of any leaves on the road surface, avoiding headaches and costly repair in the future.

So what should you do in the example above with the trucks lined up, paver running, and the contractor breathing fire? I would remove the leaves with the leaf blower, and keep an eye on that clown.

Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC): Assessment Update

As this newsletter goes to press, QA/QC visits for 2004 are over. During the last several months, the QA/QC assessment team has visited some of the largest county programs in the state. In fact, the April - November QA/QC visits involved counties that have received 30% ($8,465,444) of the total Dirt & Gravel Road Program allocation ($28.1M) since 1997.

As part of a year-end review, the Quality Assurance/Quality Control process will be evaluated. Follow-up surveys have gone out to all eleven (11) counties visited this year. A status report and assessment of Pennsylvania’s dirt and gravel road program will be presented to the State Conservation Commission at its January 18, 2005 meeting. Fine tuning of the QA/QC process will occur during the winter months.

The complete schedule of 2005 QA/QC visits is still under review; approximately 10 QA/QC visits are anticipated. Look for the full 2005 QA/QC schedule in early 2005.

| Counties currently scheduled for QA/QC in 2005 |
| Counties where QA/QC has been completed |

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