

Town Administrator's Corner

By Marj Roy
Town Administrator

I find it hard to believe that I'm writing this for the September issue of the *Beacon*. Those summer months certainly flew by.

As schools opens, our summer office assistant has returned to his studies at UNH, and we are in the process of hiring a part-time clerk-secretary. Michael Donovan was a great help to us over the summer, and we will miss him. The ad that ran in *The Kearsarge Shopper* has provided us with 16 resumes to date. The selection will

be difficult. The October issue of the *Beacon* will announce the new member of our office staff.

The Town and School budget season will begin soon. Please watch for notices for public hearings on the budgets. These hearings are very important and provide you with an opportunity to be part of the process prior to Town Meeting.

As always, if you have questions or concerns that involve the Town, please contact the office at 735-5332 or e-mail me at TAdmin@TownOfAndover.org.



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downstream side of the bridge, which has changed the scope of the work. We thought we were all set to go this year, when we found that more detailed

information was needed. This has been a frustrating process for us, but we still expect to be able to complete the work, this year or next, without having to raise more money for the project.



Clerk from page 9

Tax Collectors' convention. Wanda will be running the office in my absence.

Thursday, September 27: The Town Clerk's office will be closed as both Wanda and I are attending an advanced training workshop at the Department of Motor Vehicles.

As you will see in a separate article (see page 1), the laws have changed regarding voting procedure. You will

be asked to provide a picture ID to the ballot clerks when you ask for your ballot. If you do not have a photo ID, you will still be allowed to vote in the primary on Tuesday, September 11.

The rules change after November 1, however. If you are not able to present an approved photo ID at the presidential election on Tuesday, November 6, you will only be permitted to vote after executing a Challenged Voter Affidavit.

See you at the polls.



Andover Road Agent

By Jon Champagne
Andover Road Agent

I was recently asked to explain why I thought it was needed to do so much to the roads when in the old days the roads were just fine, and they didn't require near what we do to them now. The person then stated that we're just a small town, and asked how did I think we could afford all this stuff. I hate to break it to folks out there, but we no longer live in the '80s, and the '90s have come and gone, too.

While not as big as some other communities in New Hampshire, the population in our town has grown almost 20 percent since 1990. According to the 2010 Census, there were 2,371 people residing in town. In 1980 there were only 1,587. This added population creates added traffic.

In the late '70s and the '80s, we could wait until the end of the storm to plow because there were just a little more than 1,200 inhabitants in Andover, and most of them were centered in the villages. Chase Hill Road was a Class 6 road from the power lines to Flaghole Road. On Tucker Mountain Road there were only eight year-round households, while today that same road has 23 year-round households.

In the last 30 years, we have added almost 10 miles of roads that we now maintain year-round. Since 1980, the school parking lot has quadrupled in size, and due to the new safer design, takes two to three hours to plow versus twenty minutes. In 1980, the town dump was plowed in about 10 minutes, but now the transfer station takes a minimum of four hours to completely plow. On Old College road, there was only one house on the dirt section, Putney road was not passable from the corner down to Boston Hill, and the list goes on and on.

On top of this, despite the fact that most of us seem to remember bigger snow accumulations, this is not necessarily the truth. The National Weather Service shows that the five-year average for yearly snowfall has increased almost 15 inches when comparing the period from 1980 to 1985 to the period from 2006 to 2011. The reason is that, despite the decrease in snowfall per occurrence, the number of occurrences has increased. The numbers look even worse when you include ice events.

Another consideration is where and why we drive. In 1980, according to a study from the University of New Hampshire, three quarters of us commuted less than 20 miles to work. Today's average commute is more than double that. We travel farther, and due to the pressures of this economy, missing work due to inclement weather is an impossibility.

Few people realize that in the winter we start plowing Plains Road at around

two in the morning to give us an hour to get it ready for morning traffic, which starts around 3 AM. In the '80s, even the state roads were deserted after dark. Today the traffic is non-stop.

When we clean snow out of the village, we have to do it after 9 PM because of traffic, and then we leave the section in front of the Town Hall and the intersection on Lawrence Street until after midnight. This gives us an operating window of only a couple of hours before traffic picks back up. With increased traffic comes an increased risk of accidents, which is why almost all municipalities perform loader operations and snow-hauling at night.

Another factor is that 30 years ago, when there was so much less traffic, if you got a couple inches of snow on the road, it really didn't affect your ability to effectively remove it. There was little traffic, and in some cases the wind could even blow the road clean. Today, a road left with as little as two inches of snow for more than a couple of hours is a headache waiting to happen.

Traffic quickly packs unplowed snow into ice even if you put a pass down the middle of the road. Tires riding down the sides will force snow into the cleared area, leaving the road as if it had never been plowed. In the early '80s, if the roads were impassable during the storm, it was just a fact of life. In the modern world it is unacceptable to most of the motoring public. Worse yet, we can be held liable for damages caused by improperly-maintained roads.

What we can do to combat these new challenges is to innovate the way the town operates. As many of you have noticed, we are putting on more small trucks. The small trucks are much faster and nimbler than the large trucks. The big trucks travel at a maximum speed of about fifteen miles an hour with the tire chains on. They can go faster with the chains off, but it takes 15 to 20 minutes to reapply the chains.

As a result, for the narrower roads, it's much quicker to have the small trucks go out and sand them. This is especially true for dead-end roads that lack a lot of room to turn around, or roads such as Dyers Crossing, where it could take an extended time for a big truck to reach.

By adding more small trucks, we have been able to cut the time it takes to treat the whole town by almost an hour. Doesn't sound like a lot, I know, but it adds up to a couple grand each year in savings to our budget. If during a storm we get a complaint from the motoring public that a certain road is impassible, it is very easy to send a little truck to correct this. The big truck routes, on the other hand, are set up to cover the most mileage in the most efficient manner possible.



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