



County Road Association
OF MICHIGAN

417 SEYMOUR AVE., STE. 1, LANSING, MI 48933-1143

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Contact: Monica Ware, APR
Phone: 517-482-1189, ext. 417
Cell: 517-749-2322

James M. Iwanicki Awarded CRA Rural Engineer of the Year

Lansing, Mich. – James M. Iwanicki, P.E., engineer manager for the Marquette County Road Commission, has been recognized by the County Road Association of Michigan as the 2014 County Road Association Rural Engineer of the Year.

“Michigan’s county road agencies employ some of the state’s brightest engineering talent,” County Road Association of Michigan director Denise Donohue said. “It has been my honor to work with Jim as a member of our board of directors. He is a coach not just to kids in the community, but also to his staff and fellow road commission staff.”

“The stories provided in his nomination made it clear that Jim has ‘coached’ the staff at the Marquette County Road Commission to identify cost savings wherever possible and fostered greater teamwork and cooperation between departments and other agencies in an effort to make the Road Commission more efficient. He is a true example of the caliber of leader Michigan’s road agencies deserve,” Donohue said.

Throughout his 16 years with the Road Commission, Iwanicki has worked to secure the federal, state and private funding needed to make improvements in Marquette County including many large road and bridge projects, multiple guardrail safety projects, an extensive “Local Jobs Today” program that included more than 20 different MDOT projects, several Category A projects, ARRA projects, US Forest Service road projects and numerous township road reconstruction or resurfacing projects.

Iwanicki has many accomplishments but his award recognition cited the upgrade of County Roads 550, 510, and Triple A in northern Marquette County, a project that is larger than any road project completed in the Upper Peninsula.

In 2012, it became clear that a new haul route was needed to meet expanding mining company needs. While Iwanicki knew that the first option provided – a privately funded 21 mile, \$82 million, CR 595 – was the safest and best option for Marquette County residents, he recognized the political difficulties in getting approval. He suggested CR 550, CR 510 and Triple A as an alternate proposal.

Working with the mining company and government officials, Jim secured in excess of \$40 million for approximately 32 miles of road and bridge upgrades. The project began in 2013 and a substantial portion of the project is expected to be completed within two years, an unprecedented and rather astonishing turn around. Today, much of the road is open for business, securing the mining company expansion and many new jobs for area residents.

“Through the entire project, Jim has been instrumental in making sure that all entities involved meet regularly, communicate often, consider public and political pressures, work to bring the project to completion on time and on budget, and delivered the finished project as promised,” said Mary Herman, finance and office manager for the Marquette County Road Commission.

“Iwanicki has demonstrated leadership, flexibility, and an ability to think out of the box on constructing this complex stretch of road,” Donohue said. “From the work conducted following the breach in the Silver Lake Dam in his early days with the Road Commission to the new haul route to the mine, his efforts are leaving a legacy that will serve Marquette County residents for many decades.”

The County Road Association represents the interests of Michigan’s 83 county road agencies that collectively maintain more than 73 percent of Michigan roads -- more than 90,000 miles and the fourth-largest local road system in the nation.

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Kurt Taavola (left), director of engineering for the Marquette County Road Commission pictured with Jim Iwanicki, as Iwanicki received his 2014 County Road Association (CRA) Rural Engineer of the Year Award at the 2015 CRA County Engineer's Workshop