



County Road Association
OF MICHIGAN

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County Road Commissions Look to Anti-Icing Techniques to Stop Ice Before it can start

Lansing, MICH. – Ever wondered why that truck is dropping material on a dry road with no snow in sight? Thinking that road worker doesn't know what he's doing, or that he's racking up unnecessary hours? Actually, they may be looking to beat winter weather to the punch with a new concept called anti-icing.

Anti-icing goes beyond what can be done to de-slick a road with dry salt and sand, using mineral well brine that prevents snow from even sticking to cold roads in the first place. Brine forms a bond-breaker between the pavement surface and the ice/snow, melting the snow faster and reducing chances ice will form and bond with the surface.

The process is similar to cooking oil, preventing food from sticking to a frying pan.

In an eight-year study by the Road Commission for Montcalm County (RCMC), the road crew found anti-icing to be an effective tool in combating dangerous winter driving conditions.

"We have to do what we can to make roads safe for travel as quickly as possible," said Mark Christensen, superintendent-manager, Road Commission for Montcalm County, in the County Road Association's latest issue of *Crossroads* magazine. "Anti-icing is a proactive approach to winter road maintenance. We've seen the success of anti-icing and learned when and where it works best."

RCMC, operating on a shoestring budget, originally outfitted a single truck with equipment capable of spraying brine on roads. In the first year, RCMC saw a 20 percent cutback in slide-through accidents and rear-enders in areas where anti-icing was used. By the third year, the reduction in accidents dropped to 35 percent.

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RCMC now has seven trucks capable of spraying brine that will last on roads for two weeks if there aren't any winter weather events to wash it away. RCMC has also cut its dry salt use substantially, dropping from 15,000 tons per year to about 5,000 tons, depending on the severity of the winter. This saves the road commission winter maintenance money.

For more information on the innovations of county road agencies in Michigan, visit www.micountyroads.org/Newsroom/Crossroads-Magazine.

The 83 members of the County Road Association represent the unified, credible and effective voice for a safe and efficient local road system in Michigan, collectively managing more than 73 percent of all roads in the state— more than 90,000 miles and 5,700 bridges—the fourth-largest county road system in the nation.

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