



County Road Association
OF MICHIGAN

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

March 5, 2024

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TAKE TO THE SKIES!

County road agencies harness the power of drones to revolutionize operations

LANSING, MI – Drones are rapidly being adopted in the tool cribs of county road agencies, where they enhance efficiency and effectiveness in many ways. Equipped with high-resolution cameras and advanced sensors, these unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) are reshaping the landscape of Michigan county road agency operations.

From inspections to surveys and maintenance activities, UAVs are streamlining road work processes and providing valuable insights previously unattainable from ground-based methods. Here's a glimpse into how three county road agencies are leveraging drone technology:

Genesee County Road Commission (GCRC)

Embracing innovation, GCRC has been at the forefront of UAV adoption in road work since 2019. Initially employed for preconstruction videos and bridge inspections, GCRC's drones have evolved into indispensable tools for tasks such as creating 3D maps for stockpile calculations.

Saginaw County Road Commission (SCRC)

SCRC invested in UAV technology four years ago. Utilized primarily for communication enhancement and stockpile inventory simplification, drones have significantly reduced staff requirements and operational risks.

Ottawa County Road Commission (OCRC)

OCRC also adopted UAVs about four years ago. Focused primarily on communications and public relations, OCRC has utilized drones to document projects, create informational videos, and provide unique perspectives.

As county road agencies continue to adapt to changing landscapes and technological advancements, drones are proving to be invaluable assets in their efforts to maintain a safe, efficient county road and bridge system.

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Read more in the spring 2024 issue of *Crossroads* magazine, the quarterly journal of the County Road Association (CRA) of Michigan, which can be viewed digitally or downloaded at micountyroads.org/Crossroads.

The 83 members of the County Road Association of Michigan represent the unified voice for a safe and efficient county transportation infrastructure system in Michigan, including appropriate stewardship of the public's right-of-way in rural and urban Michigan. Collectively, Michigan's county road agencies manage 75% of all roads in the state, including 90,500 miles of roads and 5,900 bridges. County road agencies also maintain the state's highway system in 63 counties. Michigan has the nation's fourth-largest local road system.

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