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CROSSROADS

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Mason County Road Commission innovates with new snowplow tracking tech

LANSING, MI – It would be easy for the public to see a snowplow driving down your local road this winter and assume "same ol', same ol'." That couldn't be further from the truth in Mason County where the road commission has a real-time snowplow tracking software ready for the 2021-2022 winter season.

Called SnowPaths, the tracking software allows residents to see where plows are located in the county and get an idea of when their road will be plowed via a portal on MCRC's website. After a pilot test in 2020-2021, the Mason County Road Commission says the service was popular among residents and staff.

"We had one resident reach out to let us know he was new to the area and loved using SnowPaths to help him get to know the local roads," said Mary Samuels, MCRC managing director. "It's good to have something the public can put their hands on and be a part of the process."

In addition to the residents viewing the software online, MCRC's own staff used the technology while on the job to see which areas needed plowing assistance or where to pick up after a coworker left off. An unintended benefit was using the software for the county's brine program to treat unpaved roads in the summertime.

To learn more about MCRC's real-time snowplow tracking software, read the Fall 2021 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 percent of all roads in the state, including 90,000 miles of roads and 5,700 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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