

Bell County Road & Bridge



2019 Annual Report Volume No.7

Letter from the Engineer

While reflecting on the last twelve months of 2019, my mind goes on a roller coaster ride of emotions and accomplishments. We reviewed and processed a heavy load of plats for subdivisions, adapted to a newly elected Commissioners Court, and continued to move projects for future road improvement projects without a full administrative staff. We lost a hard-working employee who we had grown close to. Some of us in the office would say, "this past year sucked!" Everyone in our office had to accept additional work to cover the missing team member for most of the months of this past year. I learned a lot about friends, employees, and bosses during this trial. People all handled the challenge in different ways.

I saw people step up to face the extra work and address tasks that were outside their comfort zone. We benefited from cross training in areas, but we helped each other relearn how to do things better than before. Some would see a problem and take the initiative to resolve it. Others would wait until they were assigned the task. I saw limitations of individuals and their level of commitment. As the boss, I had the responsibility to make sure the work was done correctly and on time no matter the level of support I received. While the productivity suffered, the stress on each of us was real. Some people showed their emotions and others kept them hidden during this period. I met people who had various levels of compassion for others. Some were just quiet and appeared less concerned. Some just kept their head down and worked. Each of us probably didn't know what we could or should do with our thoughts and actions.

Personally, I was very frustrated and stressed out. I remember shaving one morning and told my wife, "All I do is shave, go to work, and come home to sleep. I am tired of this (stressed out routine). I don't even know what day it is." One day an old friend of mine, who is a retired county engineer, came into see me. He asked how I was doing, and I told him, "Only a few times in my life have I hated my job. This is one of those times." He regretted to hear that and offered to work part time to help review plats. I told him I didn't have anything in the budget to pay him. A moment of silence passed, and he said, "I am willing to come help you without pay." I told him, "I don't know how long it was going to be this way." He responded, "It doesn't matter. I don't like to see you this way." That man will always be special to me. He cared to help me when he knew I was down. Hopefully you have some people like that in your life.

Work improved once I was able to hire another person and duties began getting back to normal operations. One door closes but another one opens. Things are much better for all of us, but the memories of the experience will be with us forever.

Bryan Neaves, P.E., CFM
Bell County Engineer

In this issue...



Hauling and Pits crew serve a vital role supporting all Road and Bridge crews. The ability to move large quantities of materials safely across the county is their primary objective.



Construction Crews continue to build and reconstruct new county roads across the county.



Safety continues to be a top priority for the department. Each year safety training is provided for all employees. This year was no different offering additional training through the Texas Association of Counties.

Sections

3 Annual Work Plan showcases planned activities approved by Bell Commissioner's Court

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14 Featured articles summarizing annual conferences, training opportunities and safety summary report



Work Plan

Five key activities are used to complete the County’s work plan. The Asphalt crew handles all seal coating and level-up, interlocal agreements and pavement widening projects. Our Construction crew is responsible for completing new construction and re-construction projects in all precincts. All structural improvements are accomplished by the Bridge crew. The following tables hope to display the crew’s work and successes throughout 2019. This Work Plan Summary table displays an overview of all five work plan activities by Precincts.



Work performed in 2019 was based on the approved 2018 work plan. A revised 2020 workplan will be presented to Commissioners in January. The Commissioner’s Court will approved the projects that are priorities for the upcoming year.



Construction crews work on Lindemann Rd.



Bridge crew at Stockton culvert site.

Activity	Pct. 1	Pct. 2	Pct. 3	Pct.4
Seal Coat (<i>miles</i>)	37.16	17.15	37.10	15.13
Pavement Widening (<i>miles</i>)	1.00	.50	1.00	.25
Interlocal Agreement (<i>each</i>)	3	0	0	0
Construction Projects (<i>miles</i>)	3.01	0.61	7.54	0.00
Structure Improvements (<i>each</i>)	0	0	2	0

Seal Coat 2019

Road and Bridge’s seal coat program’s goal is to cover one hundred miles of county roadways each year. This is our fourth consecutive year to reach that mark. Many challenges occurred during this year. The Asphalt Crew, led by Emilio Ramirez fell ill for an time period placing the responsibility on Chris Schneider’s ability to complete this year’s campaign. Overall, the team rallied and was able to hit their highest mileage total to date. Upon Emilio’s return, another challenge awaited the team coming down the home stretch in the form of equipment malfunctions. This pushed our seal season a bit longer than expected. Nevertheless, with our seasoned general back at his helm, we are proud of our seal coat product and the team’s accomplishments. The following tables highlight our seven - year Seal Coat history and projections for next year.



Year	Miles	Materials Cost (Millions)
2013	85.62	\$1.61
2014	91.14	\$2.24
2015	95.83	\$1.66
2016	104.40	\$1.58
2017	106.42	\$1.36
2018	105.55	\$2.28
2019	106.84	\$2.16

Precinct	2018 Hot Mix (Tons)	2019 Seal Coat Level Up (Tons)	2019 Routine Maint. (Tons)	Projected 2020 Seal Coat (Tons)
1	1611	1510	993	1630
2	1448	1306	116	1065
3	6626	2418	3867	1408
4	24	240	221	580
Totals	9709	5474	5197	4683

Pavement Widening

Pavement Widening is part of our workplan for its preparatory nature. Widening is performed throughout the year and is usually done specifically on roads that become part of the seal coat program. The roads selected for this type of maintenance are usually addressed as a temporary short-term fix until the road is placed on the seal coat program. The Asphalt Crew specialize in multiple disciplines dealing with both hot mix and cold mix materials. The following break down shows miles placed by each Precinct in 2019.



Lightweight seal coat aggregate.

Precinct	Mix Used (Tons)	Miles
1	15.0	1.00
2	7.5	.50
3	15.0	1.00
4	4.0	.25
Totals	41.5	2.75

Interlocal Agreements

The Road and Bridge is pleased to partner with surrounding communities to help improve the quality of roadways throughout the county. We use county equipment and the respective cities reimburse the county all materials cost. Street improvement includes rebuilding the road and improving drainage on both sides. The summary below summarizes 2019.

City	Location	Miles	Activity	Materials Cost
City of Holland	Harper Road*	0.39	Full Depth Reclamation	\$16,706.00
City of Holland	Hogan*	0.72	Full Depth Reclamation	\$31,124.00
City of Holland	Crockett Street*	0.61	Full Depth Reclamation	\$18,204.00
City of Nolanville	Pleasant Hill Cemetery Rd*		Brush Trim	\$3,764.00**

*Final edge and 2nd Seal Coat will be added to original agreement (2020)

**Labor & equipment cost

Construction Projects

Precinct	Location	Activity	Miles	Materials Cost
1	Lindemann Rd.	Full Depth Reclamation	1.59	\$22,948.00
1	Harber Rd.	Full Depth Reclamation	1.16	\$8,073.00
1	Fawn Trail	Full Depth Reclamation	0.15	\$12,922.00
1	Lake Park Rd.	New Road Construction	0.11	\$7,119.00
2	Williams Rd.	New Road Construction	0.61	\$97,511.00
3	Woodford Rd.	Gravel Rehabilitation	1.33	\$3,892.00
3	Asa Rd.	Gravel to Pavement	1.25	\$27,298.08
3	Deer Creek Rd.	Gravel to Pavement	0.70	\$24,950.00
3	Theo Loop	Gravel to Pavement	4.26	\$130,663.00

Structure Improvements

Albert Delgado's Bridge crew completed two structure improvements this year. Romberg culvert was extremely challenging due to its size and location of the wing. This project consisted of placing concrete in three lifts. The wing measured thirty feet long, twenty feet tall by one foot wide with guardrail post anchored to it. The crew needed to excavate around existing wing and set forms for the massive new wing. At the Stockton Rd. culvert, it was routine business with the removal and installation of new box culverts for future paving projects.

Precinct	Location	Materials Cost
1	Stockton Rd.	\$18,406.00
3	Romberg Rd.	\$12,196.00



Maintenance Summary

The Maintenance Summary displays the diversity of tasks completed throughout the year by our Road and Bridge crews. These routine maintenance activities are tracked and data is collected by the Cartegraph database. This platform allows us to monitor multiple tasks simultaneously as they are completed in real time. The following table showcases our diverse crews and their accomplishments.

Precinct	Labor Hours	Labor Cost	Materials Cost	Totals
Ditch Maintenance	2320	\$60,577.06	\$913.63	\$61,490.69
Pipe Installation	2446	\$63,300.72	\$32,794.03	\$96,094.75
Pipe Repairs	2017	\$52,316.92	\$31,075.79	\$83,392.71
Crackseal	1046	\$22,900.45	\$16,049.81	\$38,950.26
Herbicide	219	\$5,104.05	\$16,425.00***	\$21,529.05
Sign Maintenance	762	\$20,477.19	\$3,072.02	\$23,549.21
Vegetation Management	5169	\$127,153.12	-	\$127,153.12
Trash & Debris	352	\$9,289.06	-	\$9,289.06
Mowing	9745	\$115,469.94	-	\$115,469.94
Pavement Marking	-	-	-	\$52,241.41*
Recyclables**	-	-	-	\$5,554.25

*Contract with DIJ Construction. **See Recyclables section on page 13.

***Contract with Roadside, Inc.

Ditch Maintenance

Ditch Maintenance includes removing built up silt in the channel, reshaping and improving the cross slopes, removing and vegetative clearing.

Precinct	Labor Hours	Labor Cost	Materials Cost	Totals
1	521	\$13,738.43	\$101.00	\$13,839.43
2	285	\$7,458.85	\$77.25	\$7,536.10
3	1262	\$32,955.63	\$735.38	\$33,691.01
4	253	\$6,424.15	\$0.00	\$6,424.15
Totals	2320	\$60,577.06	\$913.63	\$61,490.69

Pipe Installation

Staying proactive with our pipe installations is vital in roadway maintenance. This crew is responsible for driveway installs throughout the year and heavy excavation for culverts crossing the road. The primary function for these pipes is to move runoff during rain events. Although flooding will occur at the roads lowest point, our crews work hard to improve the county drainage system each year. Finally, no project is complete until the final shaping of the ditch slopes on both sides upstream and downstream to the county right of way. The following table displays our totals for 2019.



Side road pipe on Lindermann Rd.

Precinct	Labor Hours	Labor Cost	Materials Cost	Totals
1	626	\$16,139.22	\$11,153.98	\$27,293.20
2	523	\$13,727.50	\$5,760.30	\$19,487.80
3	1126	\$28,961.59	\$14,282.73	\$43,244.32
4	171	\$4,472.41	\$1,597.02	\$6,069.43
Totals	2446	\$63,300.72	\$32,794.03	\$96,094.75

Pipe Repairs

Maintenance repairs to existing infrastructure aides in the preservation of roadway life. It helps reduce future cost of replacing the entire structure. While pipes are being repaired this crew will also evaluate both sides of the culvert along the ditch line and make accommodations as needed. Over time, erosion may occur and affect drainage flow in the area. The following table displays work completed this year per precinct.

Precinct	Labor Hours	Labor Cost	Materials Cost	Totals
1	1017	\$26,376.14	\$20,200.57	\$46,576.71
2	227	\$5,898.41	\$2,168.31	\$8,066.72
3	598	\$15,517.91	\$6,986.94	\$22,504.85
4	176	\$4,524.46	\$1,719.97	\$6,244.43
Totals	2017	\$52,316.92	\$31,075.79	\$83,392.71

Crackseal

Cracking is the visible evidence caused by pavement settlement or stress. The cracking may be horizontal along road edges or vertical and horizontal cutting into base and subgrade material. Usually its surface related but occasionally base failure does occur. The cracks grow over time for many different reasons. It's important to be proactive when dealing with cracking because it will worsen and become more expensive to fix. Crack sealing can be performed year round, but not recommended. Optimum bonding takes place during the cooler temperatures when cracks are widest. Materials used are ice chat to fill the large gaps, and PF3 rubber for surface sealing. Our crackseal crew logged over a thousand hours sealing cracks county wide.



Precinct	Labor Hours	Labor Cost	Materials Cost	Totals
1	16	\$386.24	\$354.03	\$740.27
2	184	\$3,473.63	\$2,242.50	\$5,716.13
3	847	\$19,040.58	\$13,453.28	\$32,493.86
4	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Totals	1046	\$22,900.45	\$16,049.81	\$38,950.26

Herbicide

Herbicide is another preventative maintenance activity that helps in various ways. Our target areas are primarily roadway edges but this crew also sprays around large culverts, larger commercial mailboxes, intersections, deep ditches and georgia cane areas. Road and Bridge crews logged two hundred and nineteen hours in 2019. Roadside, Inc. was also contracted to spray pavement edges and kill cane in right of way. The summary below displays the totals for this year.

Precinct	Miles	Contract Cost	R&B Labor Hours	R&B Labor Cost
1	68.66	\$5,821.20	88	\$1,954.33
2	24.11	\$2,044.12	51	\$1,267.78
3	100.96	\$8,559.69	78	\$1,820.44
4	0.00	\$0.00	2	\$61.50
Totals	193.73	\$16,425.00	219	\$5,104.05

Sign Maintenance

All Bell County roadway signs will meet TxDOT standards and minimal requirements stated in the Texas Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). Maintaining signs include; new sign installation, replacing signs due to poor reflectivity and repairs. Our two man crew logged over eighteen hundred labor hours totaling \$49,790.23.



Precinct	Labor Hours	Labor Cost	Materials Cost	Totals
1	584	\$15,589.34	\$9,317.97	\$24,907.31
2	521	\$13,931.43	\$8,634.16	\$22,565.59
3	564	\$14,990.70	\$7,652.19	\$22,642.89
4	199	\$5,278.76	\$8,106.81	\$13,385.57
Totals	1868	\$49,790.23	\$33,711.12	\$83,501.35

Vegetation Management

The traveling public never really appreciates the well groomed trees along their way. Without this crew, overhanging trees and over grown areas would cause safety issues. Sight distance around curves and hill sections is always needed. Vegetative management logged over five thousand labor hours costing \$127,153.12. The summary table shows the break down by precinct.

Precinct	Labor Hours	Labor Cost
1	1430	\$35,190.43
2	49	\$1,191.12
3	2022	\$49,253.61
4	1669	\$41,517.96
Totals	5169	\$127,153.12

Trash & Debris

Lee Love’s trash pickup crew is performed by two or three employees at a time. This crew receives tasks that include dead animals, trash and debris, scrap tires and recyclables. This crew made an incredible effort keep the entire Bell County road system clear of trash along our county roads.



Precinct	# of Tasks	Labor Hours	Labor Cost
1	78	126	\$3,341.65
2	34	63	\$1,666.21
3	55	116	\$3,023.35
4	20	48	\$1,257.85
Totals	187	352	\$9,289.06

Mowing

Driver visibility depends on a few roadside factors. Chris Klepac’s mowing and shredding crew works diligently to keep sight distances clear of high grass or low hanging tree limbs. Intersections are prone areas may get overgrown quickly during a heavy rainfall year. In 2019, three full-time mowers along with one part-time mower completed three full cycles of mowing the county’s right of way. The table below displays this year’s mowing and shredding totals.

Precinct	Labor Hours	Labor Cost
1	1347	\$27,741.92
2	1194	\$24,085.81
3	2334	\$49,083.25
4	671	\$14,558.96
Totals	9745	\$115,469.94

Pavement Markings

D.I.J highlight performance came with our request for Williams Road in Salado. We needed this road to be completed at a specific time and open this new road before Salado ISD started their new school year. David Rowe was able to coordinate with D.I.J to get an outstanding result.

Precinct	Contract Cost
1	\$13,031.35
2	\$13,140.36
3	\$25,926.25
4	\$10,143.45
Totals	\$52,241.41



Striping on Williams Rd. (Pct. 2)



Recyclables

Bell County Road and Bridge Department recycles scrap tires and metals through Reliable Tire and Temple Iron and Metal respectively. This is a road maintenance activity and does not reflect tire recycle events. The cost to dispose tires does keep increasing, it's comparable to the benefit of keeping our right of way clean and roadway clean of debris. The county was reimbursed for all metals picked up.



Items	Qty.	Cost/Reimbursed
Metals (lbs.)	68,262	\$0.00/ \$1,600.32
Scrap Tires (ea.)	1,396	\$5,554.25/ \$0.00

Land Development by Malcolm Miller

Bell County's land and development process consists of a property owner or developer presenting a subdivision plat to the County Engineer's office for review. The review process is in place to ensure that developers, proposed subdivision plats and construction plans are following the Bell County Subdivision Regulations and road design standards.

In 2019, A total of seventy-four subdivision plats were submitted to the Bell County Engineer's Office for review and a total of seventy- two subdivision plats have completed the process and were approved by the Commissioner's Court.

- Precinct #1) Twenty-six subdivisions total
- Precinct #2) Fifteen subdivisions total
- Precinct #3) Twenty-five subdivisions total
- Precinct #4) Six subdivisions total

Ten residential subdivisions gained Commissioner's Court approval, and are either completed or are currently under construction:

- Precinct #1) Three Creeks Phase IV & V – 60.3-acres, 252 lots, 2.15 miles of roadway
- Precinct #1) Three Creeks Phase VI & VII – 86.61-acres, 216 lots, 1.76 miles of roadway
- Precinct #2) Amity Estates Phase V – 41.397-acres, 58 lots, 0.90 miles of roadway
- Precinct #2) Indian Oaks, Section 2 – 31.32-acres, 3 lots, 0.22 miles of roadway
- Precinct #2) The Enclave at Lake Belton – 38.86-acres, 14 lots, 0.83 miles of roadway
- Precinct #2) Callie Christina Estates – 6.811-acres, 11 lots, 0.12 miles of roadway
- Precinct #2) Spring Creek – 73.583-acres, 107 lots, 1.62 miles of roadway
- Precinct #4) Persimmons Springs Phase One – 36.87-acres, 39 lots, 0.93 miles of roadway

Additionally, in 2019 the Commissioner's Court formally accepted for maintenance a total of 29.23 acres of new right-of-way containing 4.46 miles of roadway within the following subdivisions and precincts:

- Precinct #2) The Meadows – 4.38-acres of right-of-way, 0.69 miles of roadway
- Precinct #2) Salado Mills Subdivision Phase II – 5.03-acres of right-of-way, 0.74 miles of roadway
- Precinct #1) Beulah Bluff Phase II – 4.015-acres of right-of-way, 0.56 miles of roadway
- Precinct #2) Amity Estates Phase III – 7.38-acres of right-of-way, 1.12 miles of roadway
- Precinct #3) North Lake Estates – 7.79-acres of right-of-way, 1.07 miles of roadway
- Precinct #2) Lake Park Road – 0.2 miles of roadway
- Precinct #2) Beau Allen Acre Subdivision – 0.63-acres of right-of-way, 0.08 miles of roadway

Bell County Subdivision Regulations are intended to protect the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of the County. Subdivision regulations provide the backbone of a successful planning program. The regulations assure that new additions will be compatible with overall development objectives of the County. It will encourage well planned subdivisions by establishing adequate development standards for design and construction. They provide minimal standard by which land may be divided, provide guidance and assistance to landowners and developers, and prevent the citizens of the county from the burden of maintaining substandard roads. To improve land records by establishing standards for surveyors and plats. To safeguard the interest of the public, homeowner, the sub-divider, and the County.

TACERA Conference

by Bryan Neaves, P.E., CFM

The Texas Association of County Engineers and Road Administrators held the 2019 Annual Conference in San Antonio on October 29-31. Over 219 registered for the conference which breaks our past record. We had individuals from all over the state. We had 50 vendor's tables on the second floor and several that told me that "this has been a good conference. There have been plenty of breaks for people to come by and visit at our booths. I've gotten some good leads from the visits." Several new vendors from Kansas and South Dakota were attending for the first time. These vendors brought new products like a portable LED arrow board and light weight, easily changeable mow board blades for motor graders.

The golf tournament was held on October 28 at a local golf course in San Antonio. The afternoon golf scramble had over 100 players and had an overcast but breezy 60-degree weather afternoon. It has become a tradition before the conference begins and will continue to draw more in the future.

I had the opportunity to visit with most of the vendors and attendees. Everyone I spoke with expressed that it was a good conference. The speakers were well informed and the presentations were professionally organized. Vendors like the format and most of them shared that they will continue to come back again.

There were many topics that were presented during the conference. Presentations were organized to run concurrently allowing people to select topics they were most interested in. The keynote speaker was Ms. Stacy Buck who was a practicing hospice nurse. She delivered a motivational speech encouraging us to not waste any time since we cannot control how long we may live or outlast an illness. Some of the presentations I attended were Creating a Safety Culture, Signs and Pavement Markings, Professional Ethics for Engineers, Regulations and legal issues of right of way. Other topics at the meeting were pavement preservation techniques, communicating with the public, subdivision regulations discussion panel, and Jim Allison's legislative updates. Bryan Neaves made a presentation on Wednesday, "Bell County Safety Awards Program and incentives." Stephen Eubanks from Bell County was publicly remembered during the Awards Luncheon on that same date. While allowing the county engineer to gain current knowledge and professional development hours, social networking in the evenings with peers and county officials in similar work was enjoyed on the nearby Riverwalk.



TFMA Conference *by Duane Herrera, CFM*

The Texas Floodplain Management Association hosted the Spring 2019 Conference at the Hyatt Regency at Reunion in Dallas, Texas. This event was extremely well organized offering members various tracks to follow. These workshops showcased a diverse range of engineering topics and dynamic presentations forecasting approaching water issues across the state. This conference offers professional floodplain management training and an opportunity to earn continuing education units needed to maintain our certification. The Hyatt Regency is a beautiful hotel that sits in walking distance of the John F. Kennedy assassination location. Bryan Neaves, P.E., CFM and Duane Herrera, CFM attended this event and received training on various topics. A few topics that we attended included the following:

- Detention Pond and TCEQ
- Regional Detention and Flood Risks
- Emergency Management Flood Hazard Tools
- Johnstown Flood (1882) Modeled
- Terrorism in the Floodplain



NACE Conference by *Bryan Neaves, P.E., CFM*

The 2019 NACE Annual Conference was held in Wichita, Kansas from April 14 to April 18, 2019 at the Hyatt Regency/Century II Convention Center. Texas was represented by Robert Berndt and Joe Trammel from Tarrant County, Bryan Neaves from Bell County, Yancy Scott from Waller County, Charlie Hastings from Kerr County, Joseph Jackson of Ellis County, and Ron Drachenberg (Retired) from Fort Bend County.

There were many topics covered at the Conference and the attendees had their choice of three to four main topics during each program track. The two days in the Exhibit Hall brought 113 companies from all over the United States. Some of the sessions Bryan attended were Effectiveness of various pavement preservation techniques, Thin lift hot mix overlays, Gravel road maintenance techniques, Service life of steel culverts, and Roadside safety.

A self-tour along the Riverwalk allowed me to visit several memorials to soldiers of different wars and the Indian statue lit as the “Keeper of the Plains.” The keynote speaker was Charles Marshall who is a humorous motivational speaker.



Safety Summary

The Bell County Safety Awards Program was approved in 2006. This is an incentive program to help road and bridge employees keep safety their first priority. Throughout the year, incidents along with accidents are recorded. These incidents are then voted on by a safety review committee seated by their peers and are ruled chargeable accounts or non-chargeable. Each year, awards are given to safe crews and safe individuals without any chargeable incidents or accidents.

The Road and Bridge currently has 92 employees and will award 80 employees with their annual safety award. No employees qualified this year for the 10-year consecutive award. The next available class will be in two years.



Training Opportunity

Texas Association of Counties visited the Road and Bridge Department and brought their Truck Driving Simulator. This training was available at the Bell County Road and Bridge yard between October 29th and November 7th. This would mark a first time experience for our department to participate in the driving course along with a truck driving simulator. The simulator is able to create a computer model for heavy trucks, pickups and large vans. The computer enhanced environment once started, gives drivers a real time driving simulation. It video records the driver as he navigates various terrains while also recording and monitoring faults that can later be reviewed. Mr. Don Courtney presented his curriculum in a classroom setting first, then allowed our drivers to try their hands on the simulator. Don said, "My goal is to use the driving simulator to reduce cost to the county by reducing collisions and injuries to the county driver,". Don also informed us that the simulator has been across Texas logging more than 750,000 miles and has trained over 15,000 county employees since 2000. Mr. Courtney was able to train 84 Road and Bridge department personnel.



Special thanks to all contributors of information, photos and work performed to help complete this extensive annual report. This report proudly showcases an accurate record of Bell County's Road and Bridge Department's accomplishments for 2019.

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