



County of Orleans

**Department of Highways/Buildings &
Grounds**

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THE ORLEANS COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

The Orleans County Highway Department has (20) full-time employees and (1) part-time Fuel Farm Manager. This department is responsible for maintenance and reconstruction of 196.22 miles of County Roads and 72 Bridges.

We are required to patch pavement, patch shoulders, grading, cleaning and improving ditches, traffic sign repair and replacement, bridge repair, cutting tree brush, culvert pipes, reconstruction and replacement of roads and bridges and plow and haul snow and ice for county office parking lots. Cost information on labor, equipment and materials plays an essential part in maintaining payroll and job costing.

We also provide vehicle service and maintenance on all county vehicles, Soil and Water tractor mower, Regional Transit Service of Orleans buses, and work in collaboration with the Orleans County Planning Department to provide maintenance on our docks at the Marine Park and Point Breeze.

A large part of Highway's responsibilities is to administer the Fuel Farm, which includes ordering of fuel, maintaining pumps, invoicing, collections and the distribution of fuel key fobs. A new fob and driver pin system was implemented and island upgrades were done in 2014. In 2017, due to obsolete hardware and software, we have budgeted for additional upgrades in a Monitoring System and software program. Lower fuel costs for police, fire, highways and schools all help keep tax dollars to minimum.

The merger of Highway and Buildings and Grounds has saved thousands of dollars in administrative costs and sharing of manpower. The new Highway/Buildings and Grounds Department work together at the Point Breeze Dock, Marine Park, County parking lots and use of vehicles. We have also required that all products bought by us be looked at for purchase locally first and outside of Orleans County 2nd to keep tax dollars local.

The Orleans County Highway Department works cooperatively with the Towns on maintaining highway projects. In 2016, Highway completed 29.72 miles of resurfacing and construction of roads which were split into (15) projects. In 2017, Engineering will begin on the Four Bridge Locations in Orleans County and construction will begin in 2018 for the Six Bridge Locations in Orleans County. Genesee Transportation Counsel has awarded six future bridge

maintenance projects through 2020. These projects will be a big investment needed in the future. In the coming years, Federal and State funding for bridges will be drastically cut by the State by changing the qualifications for bridges. This has redirected monies from local to State projects. The County is in the process of replacing two more bridges in 2016 and one bridge and two culverts in 2017 with local monies.

The Orleans County Legislature has passed a resolution for the road sign Retroreflectivity upgrade plan mandated by New York State. This requires the County to have a plan in place to maintain the minimum reflectivity of our signs. All of the STOP and STOP AHEAD signs have been replaced, but many more still need to be done in the next few years. Each sign will have to be checked every year and logged into a program for condition and replacement when necessary.

2016 has been another challenging year. Costs have risen and highway's budget has remained comparable to previous years. Our employees are doing more with less and are a great asset to our department. In 2012, OCHD has added the Villages of Albion, Holley, Lyndonville and Medina to the Shared Services agreement to expand the cooperation of departments and keep budgets in line. For 2017, there will be approximately 20 miles of road construction and/or resurfacing divided up into several projects.

The Highway Department has completed a Culvert study with Labella Engineering to list conditions and size of our many culverts. This will be added to our bridge inventory program so we will have a complete plan of the future needs and costs for replacement or maintenance of our 72 bridges and over 300 culverts. Also in 2016, inventory of all County owned road signs and guardrails will be added to our program.

The Highway's fleet of equipment has had limited updating and continues to age having many units approximately 10 to 20 years old. With the Towns sharing the use of our equipment, it becomes a major challenge for our department. The County continues to replace equipment and has helped in us being able to complete many more projects.

Our goal for a new Highway building with Regional Transit Service of Orleans and to combine the two current garages into one which will result in savings by not having duplication. We have outgrown the current facilities and can better service and share workforce with one location. The old building would be used for storage of expensive equipment that now sits outside, plus be used to build concrete box culverts for use on local projects. Also, many EDA projects, demo of Village properties, PSB parking lot, paving and bridge repair round out another ambitious year.

LEGISLATION AND FUNDING

The Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS) provides State funds to municipalities to support the construction and repair of highways, bridges, highway-railroad crossing, and other facilities that are not on the State highway system.

Apportionments to municipalities are calculated annual by the New York State Department of Transportation. Upon approval of the State Budget, NYSDOT determines each municipality's final CHIPS Capital apportionment for the new State fiscal year and notifies the municipality of the

available amount. Special requirements for CHIPS Capital projects do apply and are located on the NYSDOT website at www.dot.ny.gov. Orleans County received \$1,289,594.40 in CHIPS in 2016 and a PAVE NY GRANT for \$294,362.76 from New York State.

To support CHIPS and other state infrastructure funding, please email or contact your New York State Senate – 62nd district and your New York State Assemblyman – 139th District.

*Gerald R. Gray, Superintendent
Highway and Buildings and Grounds*