

Questions Feb. 12, 2014

Q. How many tons of salt and gravel did you use during the recent snow and ice storm?

A. During the period from January 28th through February 1st, the Road Dept. used 500 tons of salt and 89's mixture (pea gravel) .

Q. How much money did this snow/ice event cost the county?

A. These events don't come cheap, that's for sure. By the time you count labor, materials, overtime and equipment, our total cost exceeded \$ 30,000, with just the salt and gravel being around \$ 18,000.

Q. I heard one person say they never saw a salt spreader on their road. How does the Road Dept. determine what roads to treat?

A. There were not many roads that did not get salt at least once. It may have been Thursday or Friday, but we tried to get every road possible. We try to scrape/salt all main roads first and then the secondary roads. We actually do not apply salt on roads that are paved with tar and gravel (surface treatment) because the salt will eat the tar out of the road with time and ruin the pavement. However, we do apply sand and gravel to these roads. After they first treat everything around town, the smaller trucks go out to each of the precincts and the two big trucks handle the larger roads like Blue Ridge Hwy., Loving Road, Pat Colwell, Town Creek School Rd., etc. During this snow/ice event they salted and scraped approximately 495 miles of asphalt roads and 26 miles of surface treatment roads working around the clock from Tuesday around 10:00 am until Friday at midnight. They did an outstanding job.

Q. I heard we are having the primary election early this year. Why is that?

A. The Primary will be May 20th this year instead of July as it usually is. In 2012 there was a court case requesting more time for overseas and military voters to receive and return absentee ballots for elections with federal candidates on the ballot. Previously, the runoff was 3-4 weeks after the election. The Court ruled late last year that there should be 9 weeks between the primary and runoff and 24 weeks between the primary and the November General election in elections with federal candidates. Georgia HB 310 changed the state and local voting calendar to match the federal calendar to avoid having two separate primaries and runoffs which would have created a huge cost for counties and would have been very confusing for Georgia voters. By moving the primary date earlier it also moves the qualifying period earlier for all offices. Qualifying will be March 3rd – March 7th this year followed by the May 20th election.

For more information on election dates, early voting, registering to vote, etc. please contact our Registrar's Office at 706-439-6016.

Q. How many questions have you answered in your column this past year?

A. We answered 378 questions in 2013. I started this Q & A format soon after I first took office in 2001 as a way of keeping the public informed about the inner workings of county government. A majority of the questions are actual questions asked by the public but many are informative questions about a particular subject. My assistant has kept an index of every question asked over the years and it is amazing to go back and see the various subjects covered,

everything from A (Animal Control) to Z (zoning). If you average around 400 questions a year that would be 5,200 questions over the 13 years I have been in office. This takes a lot of time and effort, but I feel it is one of the best ways that I have of communicating with the public.