

## **Commissioner Questions Wednesday, March 11, 2015 - Winter Weather Part 1**

**Q. The Road Dept did an exceptional job on our roads? Can you thank them for us?**

A. I want to thank the many folks on Facebook and on the streets who have offered up congratulations to me on behalf of the county employees. They have indeed done an exceptional job during the past two weeks of winter weather. I also want to thank the Fire and Rescue Dept volunteers and staff, E-911 and our outstanding dispatchers, our Sheriff Dept, Ambulance Service, and other staff members who helped in any way.

**Q. How difficult is it to drive a salt spreader truck?**

A. Until you have ridden in a salt spreader truck most of a night, beating your body as you go over the many bumps in the roads caused by the snow and ice, going up the side of dark mountain roads in thick fog and snowy conditions, backing up when you can't see what is behind you, deciding whether it is better to scrape only, spread gravel and salt only, or do both, will you have an appreciation for what these guys at the Road Dept do for you. It is extremely difficult and can be quite dangerous.

**Q. Do all counties have the same level of snow removal as Union County?**

A. I can assure you that no other rural county provides the level of snow removal that your county does, nor do they have the equipment we have. This is not meant to be negative on other counties because I know many of them do a good job. There are only a few mountain counties that are faced with this problem on a regular basis and most do not have the miles of roads that we have.

**Q. What is the hardest part of dealing with severe winter weather?**

A. The hardest part to me is the pressure. We can handle snow, but ice is a different story. We do not want to end up in a position like Atlanta last year during the ice storm, where there was total gridlock on the highways and people stranded or in accidents. When a county is unprepared or caught off guard, not only can it cause accidents but it can cause deaths. Those responsibilities are on me and many of our crews working throughout the county, and there is no question that it has an impact on us to try to be as prepared as possible.