

## **Who is driving the decisions on local road projects and maintenance?**

As you're taking a leisurely drive on any given day in many Michigan townships, you may have experienced a rough patch of road or questioned why the speed limit is the rate it is for that particular stretch of road. Although the road may be located within a township, did you know that the township does not have authority over that road?

Many residents do not realize that local roads, including construction and maintenance of these roads, are under the jurisdiction of the county where the road is located. Since the 1930s, townships have had little road authority, and they receive **no** transportation funding (Public Act 51 of 1951). In fact, many townships in Michigan *do* contribute money to the road commission in the county in which their township is situated.

In years past, many counties requested a 50-50 match from townships for construction, repair and maintenance of local roads. Due to changes in funding over the last decade, it is now common for counties to ask townships to pick up 75% of the cost in order to receive a 25% funding match from the county. In some cases, counties require that 100% of the cost of the project be funded by the township. Laketon Township spent \$1800.00 in 2009 on brining unpaved roads with 50% matching funds from the Muskegon County Road Commission. In addition, Laketon Township pays the cost to purchase and install replacement street signs, such as road name signs and stop signs.

Transportation funding at the state level has not increased in years, and there has been a sharp decrease in state shared revenue to local units of government. The result? Local roads are being shortchanged.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 provided for significant funding for road projects. While that money is primarily being spent on federal highways and roads under state jurisdiction, rather than local roads, Muskegon County did receive some funding that will result in the repaving of Scenic Drive in 2010.

While the funding of roads is likely to be an ongoing issue for Michigan for some time to come, it is important for residents to be aware of the township's limited role in road projects and maintenance. Issues related to local roads are best addressed by the Muskegon County Road Commission, which has the both the authority and responsibility to handle these matters. For more information, contact the Muskegon County Road Commission at 231-788-2381.