



From the Offices of the  
**Clay County Commission**  
Clay County, Missouri

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[www.claycountymo.gov](http://www.claycountymo.gov)

Clay County and much of the Midwest has seen quite the winter this year, and most residents agree that they've had quite enough of winter. Warmer weather and sunshine will be a welcome change, whenever it finally arrives!

As everyone has seen, this winter has not been kind to the roads in our area. Potholes are noticeably increasing in size and in number all across the KC metro area. The main cause of the current road conditions are freeze-thaw cycles. Freeze-thaw cycles allow water within cracked pavement to freeze and expand, thus creating cracks and potholes; the road base and subgrade materials can also be adversely affected by the winter's fluctuating temperatures. Potholes might seem to occur overnight, but in reality, the pothole may have been developing for some time, unseen, until the "pothole bubble" is burst due to heavy vehicles.

When it comes to gravel roads, similar issues occur. In addition, when plowing these surfaces following a snowfall, it is not uncommon for rock to be plowed from the surface along with the snow. Consequently, gravel roads are barer than they were before the winter. They are susceptible to becoming quite muddy since the gravel is in need of replenishment. County crews have worked to supplement the rock on some roads to get them through the winter. When the snow stops flying for good this season, the Highway Department will add more rock to the gravel roads and grade them.

The optimal time to patch potholes is when weather conditions are dry and the ground isn't frozen. As you have experienced, we have had a lot of cold weather and plenty of precipitation. Even so, Clay County Highway Department crews have patched some potholes when it has been possible this winter. Because the weather conditions are not optimal, often the patches done during the winter may not adhere as well as they might otherwise. The crews at the Clay County Highway Department do it all (fill potholes, fix gravel roads, plow snow, etc.), so they have been kept quite busy!

The Highway Department works to address road condition issues as they arise, and is also trying to incorporate more preventative maintenance as time and budget allows. Field supervisors and crew members check roads, bridges, and culverts regularly, but with about 400 miles of roadway, it isn't possible to be constantly aware of the condition of all of the roads. So, they always welcome residents informing them of issues with County roads. The staff at the Clay County Highway Department understands the frustration and inconvenience the current road conditions cause. Rest reassured, the Highway Department has every intention of addressing road issues as soon as the weather allows.

Hopefully the weather will cooperate so the Highway Department crews can improve road conditions as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Soon, the transportation manager and field supervisors will be going out to inspect all of the nearly 400 miles of roads in the Clay County jurisdiction. This is another opportunity for them to become aware of road issues and to put together a plan of action.

If you would like to request road maintenance, you may do so by calling the Clay County Highway Department at 816-407-3300 or by submitting an online request [here](#).