



ASHLAND COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

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NEWS RELEASE

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From the Ashland County Highway Department

ROAD CLOSURE UPDATE

On July 11th, 2016, central Ashland County received in excess of 12 inches of rain overnight. This rainfall far exceeds the normal design capacity for bridge and culvert structures. Even though the highway structure at Silver Creek and Trout Brook on State Trunk Highway (STH) 13 had been designed to resist a 100 year flood, the structures were overwhelmed leaving two sections of highway destroyed. County and Town Roads were destroyed as well, with virtually no roads remaining intact in central Ashland County.

The first 24-36 hours after the storm were spent determining the extent of damage and erecting barricades, barrels and cones to keep people safe. Common problems were lost culverts; undermined roads; washed out roads; and high water. Initially, there was no road link between Ashland and Mellen. The Department and Town of Ashland secured a tenuous route between Mellen and Ashland by 5:00 PM on July 12th. This route is not a detour, but was meant as an emergency route.

There is still no posted detour from Ashland to Mellen through the STH 13 corridor. It will require 6 months for new structures to be placed on the STH 13 over Trout Brook and Silver Creek. The only viable route past the destroyed sections is County Trunk Highway (CTH) C. Unfortunately, CTH C was badly damaged in the event. Damage included the loss of the approach to the Trout Brook Bridge and the loss of two 8 foot culverts; a 7 foot culvert; two 6 foot culverts; a five foot culvert and an 8' x 12' Arch Pipe. Several of these culverts were 18 feet or more in depth. The Department is receiving replacement culverts this week and has begun the replacement process. An additional problem encountered is the total loss of backfill and bedding material at each culvert site. Rather than placing each pipe and using soil at the site as backfill, the Department has to haul material to cover the culverts. The storm literally scoured a ravine through each pipe crossing. It is estimated that CTH C will be open to some traffic by the middle of next week (July 27th-28th).

Saturday evening a car and light vehicle detour was opened on U.S. Highway (USH) 2. People traveling south and east from Ashland can now use this route to avoid the STH 13 corridor. STH 77 east and west is open. It is hoped that all traffic can be restored on USH 2 later this week. At present, no heavy vehicles or semi trucks can use the USH 2 detour.

Additional County Road including CTH C west of Minersville to CTH E; CTH E south of Sanborn; and CTH GG north of Mineral Lake Road remain closed at this time. Road Closings are posted on the Ashland County website and are being updated daily.

Ashland County is working with a number of counties including Price, Vilas, Oneida and Iron to assist in restoring service on our highways. At present, most of the Department's efforts are focused on trying to get the CTH C detour open. The Department is working 16 hour days and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. We will try to update our activities to let the public know what progress is being made. The Department asks for the public's patience during this recovery period. This was not a normal flood event and it was not a flood that the highway system can be designed to resist. A road system that was constructed over many years cannot be restored in days. The Department also asks the public to respect Road Closed signs. A large number of severely damaged roads and open cuts remain. Keep yourself and family safe. Slow down when travelling and respect warning signs.



State Hwy 13 Trout Brook



County Hwy C Trout Brook Bridge



County Hwy C Billy Creek



County Hwy C 84" Culvert

State Hwy 13
Silver Creek

