



Commissioners of Ross County

THE GREAT SEAL COUNTY OF OHIO • THE STATE'S FIRST CAPITAL

2 NORTH PAINT STREET, SUITE H, COURTHOUSE • CHILLICOTHE, OHIO 45601

TELEPHONE: 740-702-3085 TDD • FAX: 740-774-1602 • (877) 727-3085

web address: <http://www.rosscountycommissioners.com> • Email: rosscomclk@rosscountyohio.gov

Dwight A. Garrett, President
620 Seminole Road
Chillicothe, Ohio 45601
Phone: 740-703-4102

James E. Lowe, Vice President
176 Main Street
Frankfort, Ohio 45628
Phone: 740-466-7831

Jack A. Everson, Commissioner
86 Applewood Drive
Chillicothe, Ohio 45601
Phone: 740-701-7718

April 29, 2024

Dear U.S. Representative Wenstrup,

I am writing this letter to express my strong support for the request to repair a failed section of Cooks Hill Road, CR-602, in Ross County, Ohio.

The closure of this road since December 2018 has significantly impacted the community. Repairing Cooks Hill Road will not only restore a vital thoroughfare connecting SR-772 to SR-104 but will also have critical implications for public safety and economic development in the area.

Restoring Cooks Hill Road will enable faster response times for fire and emergency medical services to reach residents west of SR-772. It will also facilitate quicker mutual aid responses within Chillicothe, enhancing overall emergency preparedness and community safety.

Furthermore, this project holds economic promise. Repairing Cooks Hill Road could create up to 15 jobs directly related to the construction work. Additionally, a veteran's service organization located on this road anticipates a surge in membership once the road is reopened, potentially leading to an increase in their staff by up to four employees.

Given these considerations, I urge you to give serious consideration to this request. Repairing Cooks Hill Road is not just about fixing infrastructure; it's about revitalizing a community, enhancing public safety, and fostering economic growth.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please feel free to contact me if you require any further information.

Sincerely,

Dwight Garrett, President, Ross County Board of Commissioners

Xc:

File



4/30/2024

The American Legion
Joseph W. Hoffman Post 757
289 Cooks Hill Road
Chillicothe, Ohio 45601

To whom it may concern,

Our post opened in 1949. We are a nonprofit veterans club. 25% of every dollar we make goes to other charity organizations such as: Pickaway-Ross Vocational school, Mary Lou Patton Park, 757 Colts baseball team, DARE, DARS, V.A. Hospital, Combat Veterans, Southeastern and Huntington Local Schools.

We take pride in our post and do our best to help our community in any way we can. We have opened our post as warming or cooling stations when there have been extended power outages in the area. We offer events that are open to the public that allow anyone to come enjoy music and get a free hot meal. Holiday parties are always a big hit with the kids and their families. We have had several people mention when they come in for these public events, that they had no idea we were still open and assumed we closed with the road closure.

Unfortunately, our post has been struggling due to a road closure that happened in December of 2018. This has greatly affected our business as well as many other businesses and organizations in our area. We have gone from being able to have seven staff on payroll to only three. We no longer get the business to be able to be open 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. but now our hours are only 4 p.m. to 11 p.m. This road closure has cut our funds by 2/3 of what they were before the closure. Over half of our members are from Huntington Township and now have to reroute around the road closure to come to the post. Our membership amount has been cut in half since the closure.

Local businesses that are affected by this closure include but are not just limited to us, Scioto Township Fire Department, Chillicothe City School District, Local Post Office Mail carrier, Guardian Vault Services Inc., JerkyPro, Open Door Fellowship. We are also the voting station for Scioto Township with the Ross County Board of elections. This reroutes a lot of our traffic and has created an issue as some voters have a difficult time finding our location. The state of Ohio will not allow us to put a sign out at the end of Cooks Hill Road directing patrons to us. Most people see the road closed ahead sign and don't attempt to see if we're still open.

Scioto Township Fire Department now has a slower response time to emergency calls due to the road closure. The matter of minutes can be a difference between life and death, A house fire being under control or up in flames. CHS has had to reroute their buses, which adds to the district's fuel cost, this same issue applies to our local mail carrier and Guardian Valt Services as well. A lot of patrons for the local businesses have started going elsewhere due to not wanting to drive around Pixelle Specialty Solutions due to the amount of semi-truck traffic.

We have worked with commissioner Johnson and the Ross County Engineer and hosted 2 Town meetings at our post. We invited anyone that has been affected by this road closure to join us and discuss how this issue could be resolved. The biggest concerns were EMT response times, Pixelle semi-truck traffic, gas cost increase from bus reroutes and homeless setting up in the area of the road closure.

4/30/2024



The American Legion
Joseph W. Hoffman Post 757
289 Cooks Hill Road
Chillicothe, Ohio 45601

The homeless and drug traffic on this road has increased with this closure and had created a huge safety issue to our community and our staff. Cars will meet at the end of the closure sign to carry out drug deals. Theft on our property has become an issue. We had our ATV stolen out of our garage. In the process of stealing the ATV, they damaged our post van which is used by the honor guard when they are serving a funeral. This was a major cost for us because we used the ATV to plow and salt our parking lot when it snowed. Now we must pay a company each time.

We have had to remove our heated and cooled smoke shacks because the homeless were taking up residence in these shacks. Leaving drug paraphernalia left behind and the heating and or cooling units would be on for hours on end costing the post an increase in our electric bill. They have spray painted graffiti in our parking lots.

All the above mentioned creates a huge issue for the survival of our post. Our post used to have traditional bingo on every Tuesday and Sunday. We would have 100 plus people in for bingo before the road closure. Since the closure, we have been lucky to have 35 attendees each night. Therefore, we are no longer able to host bingo nights at our post. This creates a huge loss in what we can now donate to our charities.

In conclusion, this road closure has been detrimental to our post. We know that the Ross county commissioner was able to acquire a grant to go toward opening Cooks Hill Road. Brad Wenstrup has funds available to use toward the reopening of Cooks Hill Road as well.

We care about the Veterans of Ross County and helping them in any way we can. We would greatly appreciate it if Cooks Hill Road could be reopened. Thank you for your time and service to our community.

Sincerely,

The officers of American Legion Post 757

*Commander,
Dean Ramsey*

Scioto Township Trustees

ROSS COUNTY, OHIO

164 SOUTH WATT STREET • P.O. BOX 1975 • CHILlicoTHE, OHIO 45601 • (740) 775-1431

STEPHEN NEAL, FISCAL OFFICER
JOHN WETZEL

PAUL CORCORAN
WILLARD TAYLOR, III

April 30, 2024

To Ross County Commissioners.

Dear sir's

It has come to my attention that there is a possibility of obtaining a grant to cover or offset the cost of roadway repair on Cooks Hill Rd.

This stretch of roadway being closed has hampered our ability to access certain parts of our response area within Scioto Township.

When seconds count in an emergency situation we are forced to travel on an indirect path to gain access to a large populated mobile home park as well as several single family dwellings. Mobile home fires spread rapidly and this added time for response can be the difference between saving a home of life.

This was also the most direct path to the entire west side of our township. We staff a 2 person full time crew that is based from our station on England Hollow Rd. This roadway being closed has increased our response time to provide fire and life safety services to our entire west side that has multiple assisted living residents, multi story apartments as well as commercial properties health care treatment centers.

Getting this roadway reopened would greatly increase our ability to respond in a more direct pathway increasing our ability to arrive sooner to provide fire protection and life safety services. We were not included in the decision to close Cooks Hill Rd but if it is possible we would appreciate being considered for the need to reopen this roadway.

Sincerely
Chief Ryan Horsley
Scioto Twp FD



Ross County Engineer

CHARLES R. ORTMAN, P.E., P.S., ROSS COUNTY ENGINEER
DERIC A. COX, P.E., ASSISTANT COUNTY ENGINEER
755 FAIRGROUNDS ROAD • P.O. BOX 458 • CHILICOTHE, OHIO 45601-0458
PHONE: (740) 702-3130 • FAX: (740) 702-3135 • EMAIL: charlieortman@rosscountyohio.gov

April 30, 2024

The Honorable Brad R. Wenstrup
2419 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington D.C., 20515-3502

RE: Cooks Hill Rd. (CR602)

Dear Congressman Wenstrup:

I am writing to ask for your financial consideration to fund an engineered repair of Cooks Hill Road in Ross County, Ohio.

My understanding is that Cooks Hill was passed down to Ross County by ODOT, in the 1950's.

Over the years, numerous slips have occurred on Cooks Hill. The repairs have been "maintenance" measures. They do not hold up. This office has utilized Professional Geotechnical firms to recommend repairs; the recommendation for a proper repair is drilled shafts.

Today, since December of 2018 and February of 2019 rains, the portion of Cooks Hill that slipped is closed. FEMA, appropriately, could not fund the repair because it was a prior failed road and not just specific to the rains at that time. Please see the attached e-mail from John Bowdle to me. Therefore, this is an issue with over 100 years of history.

The road, prior to closing had an average daily traffic count of 1797 vehicles per day. Failures can occur without warning and can be quite significant. Some slips are estimated to be several feet deep by 10 feet wide and over a 100-foot length.

It is my hope to avoid any "maintenance" repairs and come up with the funds for a "Professionally Engineered" repair.

I can meet you at the site or send pictures. Any consideration you could help us with as to this situation would be greatly appreciated. Thank you.

Respectfully,

Charles R. Ortman, P.E., P.S.
Ross County Engineer