



NEWS RELEASE

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Unit Road Department stays busy making repairs and improvements

The summer heat is brutal in Caldwell County, but the Unit Road Department has continued to press forward toward its goal of paving all the county's gravel roads.

"Within 3 to 5 years, all of the roads in the county should be paved," Unit Road Administrator Donald LeClerc said. "We have come a long way, especially in the last 2 to 3 years thanks to securing some grants and the help of the Caldwell County Commissioners Court."

LeClerc oversees the Unit Road Department in Caldwell County, which is responsible for maintaining all county roads, including placing new materials, surface treatments and paving. The department also maintains road drainage, bridges and bridge culverts, cuts grass and clears brush.

The department's to-do list is ever-expanding, as total roadway mileage in the county has continued to grow as new subdivisions are established. The goal has been to pave 50 miles of roadway per budget year.

"We have 428 miles of road right now," LeClerc said. "Anytime a subdivision comes in, finishes its punch list and maintains the roads for two years, the county takes them over. We have a couple of subdivisions going in this year so that mileage should increase."

Approximately 57 percent of the roads in the county can now be classified as "paved," but that number will climb by the end of September said LeClerc, who said 243 miles of county roadways now bear that designation.

"We're working on another 20-25 miles that we hope to have paved by the end of this budget year," LeClerc said. "We're chip sealing them – there's no hot mix – but they get a double shot, which makes the surface a lot thicker."

Caldwell County Judge Hoppy Haden praised the progress the Unit Road department had made with paving.

"By the time most people have opened up business for the day, Unit Road workers have already been up working for a couple of hours," Haden said. "Making the roads safer and more convenient for our residents has been a priority and will continue to be a priority as our county continues to grow and its needs evolve."

The county takes certain things into consideration when determining which roads to pave first. Priorities include county roads that are thoroughfares between state highways.

“We get those done first, and then we shift our focus to dead end roads,” LeClerc said. “We also look at factors like population, how much traffic the area sees, and how much road base is on there. The ones that already have gravel running from end to end are the ones that you can seal coat.”