

## Senator, local leaders secure funds for Snyder Road project

Posted by Ashlyn Korienek on May 29th, 2019



*(From left to right): Richard Mobley, Norman Township supervisor; Brian Peace, Elmer's Crane and Dozer division manager; Jeff Dontz, Manistee County Board of Commissioners chair; 35th District Sen. Curt VanderWall; Bob Rishel, Manistee County Road Commission board chair; and Mark Sohlden, Manistee County Road Commission manager. (Ashlyn Korienek/News Advocate)*

NORMAN TWP. — Work on Snyder Road is near completion after a total resurfacing project, but officials say it would not have been possible without local and state collaboration.

The M-55 Cooley Bridge project started again this spring, making Seaman Road from Hoxeyville Road to M-55 a portion of the detour. Snyder Road, which is better suited as the dedicated detour, was in rough shape.

Now, Snyder Road will reopen on Monday.

Officials say the project, at first, seemed bleak until additional funding came through.

Norman Township, Manistee County and state leaders worked together to bring the project forward. However, a major player in the Snyder Road project was Michigan's 35th District Sen. Curt VanderWall (R-Ludington).

"It started last year when the Hoxeyville/Seaman Road bypass got done, and it came to our attention thanks to (leaders) with Norman Township that Snyder Road has been the historic bypass," said Jeff Dontz, Manistee County Board of Commissioners chair. "We needed to recover from that... it takes the stress of travel off Seaman Road, because there are no sidewalks for pedestrians and it's very close to businesses."

To fund the project, State Enhancement Funds from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MDEC) at \$300,000 was secured, which VanderWall spearheaded. The Manistee County Road Commission contributed \$232,267 and Norman Township allocated \$50,000.

Richard Mobley, Norman Township supervisor, said without VanderWall's assistance this project would not have been successful, especially since it was not planned for well in advance.

"Cooley Bridge was such a surprise on everybody, and MDOT had limited funds," said Mobley. "This road was in such bad repair. (Snyder Road) is more of a rural road and Seaman Road goes through town. I went to the county and road commission, and then they got on board as well as MDOT.

"The project was dead without Sen. VanderWall bringing the additional \$300,000."

VanderWall said since Snyder Road is an integral part of the road system in Norman Township, it needed to be resurfaced without negatively impacting the community.

"We were very fortunate last year at the end of the year to secure \$300,000 from (the MDEC) to help speed this project up, and mostly because we wanted to make sure our businesses were not cut off," VanderWall said. "We were able to work on it, and get it through. Hopefully, our businesses will stay open and prosper all summer long."

Mark Sohlden, county road commission manager, said Snyder Road was rated a two or three on the PASER scale, which is poor to very poor condition.

"The original pavement was placed about 30 years ago, and your normal life expectancy is 15 to 20 years so it definitely needed a lot of work," Sohlden said. "They did what they call full-width wedging to take care of the distorted pavement and bad areas, and then did a two inch cap of blacktop over existing pavement."

Without the extra help in funding, Sohlden said the Snyder Road project would have taken much longer to come into fruition.

Elmer's Crane and Dozer, of Traverse City, started the project on May 20 at a low bid of \$559,667. KMP Engineering, of Kingsley, performed design engineering, and Prein & Newhof, of Cadillac, completed construction engineering.

The project was finished three weeks ahead of schedule.

"The enhancement funds, especially with the M-55 Cooley Bridge detour, really expedited the process," Sohlden said.

In his district, VanderWall said rural roads make up a majority of the road network, and many need to be updated.

"For us in my district and Manistee County, rural roads are what we have," VanderWall said. "Rural roads are extremely important, and being able to maintain them and keep them up. We have all driven down roads that almost need to be ground up and redone.

"To save a road like this, and help a town survive through the busiest time of the year, is really a great come together of all the aspects from locals, the county and state."

M-55 Cooley Bridge construction is estimated to be completed by Nov. 2.