

# Improving county roads

Program helps with dirt, gravel and low-volume thoroughfares

By KYLIE HAWN  
Staff Writer

If municipalities in the county have roads that need improvement and qualify under the Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Road (DGLVR) program, they are encouraged to apply for the state program.

According to Sherri Law, dirt and gravel roads technician with the Huntingdon County Conservation District, an average of \$400,000 is awarded to municipalities each year that apply to improve their dirt and gravel as well as low-volume roads.

"The program started in 1997, and the county has participated for over 20 years," said Law. "It was a program started by Trout Unlimited to help curb sediment pollution to area streams, and the program also produces roads for everyone as well as protecting water quality."

"We awarded around \$200,000-\$300,000 in dirt and gravel road funds and about \$100,000 in low-volume road funds in the 2019-20 fiscal year (for projects that will be completed in 2020)," said Law.

Law also wants municipalities to know the difference between applying for dirt and gravel funds as opposed to low-volume road funds.

"Low-volume roads are any paved or tar and chipped seal road surface," she said.



Submitted photo

**An 11-foot-wide aluminum plate arch culvert replace a 3-foot pipe that was causing issues with erosion and sediment runoff on Ponderosa and Gorsuch roads in Henderson Township, thanks to monies awarded to the township from the Dirt, Gravel and Low-Volume Road project funds.**

"A low-volume road has 500 vehicles or less traveling on it each day. The vast majority of roads in the county are low-volume roads, but municipalities have to do a traffic count. We provide guidance on how to do that, and it's a pretty simple process."

However, dirt and gravel roads are different from low-volume roads.

"I know that some municipalities will tar and chip as a form of dust control, but once you tar and chip a road, it's bumped into the low-volume road C category," said Law.

This past year, thanks to the DGLVR program, one municipality was able to improve the road and repair a pipe that caused problems with drainage when it rained.

"A 3-foot round pipe near the intersection of Ponderosa and Gorsuch Road in Henderson Township was too small for the unnamed tributary to Murray Run," said Law. "Debris and sediment that couldn't fit through the

## Roads

Continued from Page 1

pipe accumulated at the inlet, requiring frequent maintenance to remove.

"During storms, water would shoot out of the pipe like a firehose, washing away the stream banks and road edge," she added. "So much washed away that the end of the pipe broke off and the road edge was in danger of falling into the stream, creating a safety hazard for cars traveling past. Extra sediment washing into streams also harms aquatic life by smothering the habitat that fish and insects need to survive."

The pipe was replaced with an 11-foot wide aluminum plate arch culvert in October.

"This new structure is wide

enough for the stream to maintain its natural shape as it passes through the road, and provides space for water, sediment, and debris to pass," said Law. "This protects the road by creating a stable surface and improves the health of the stream by reducing erosion."

The deadline to apply for funding hasn't been set in 2020, and they won't know exactly how much they will be awarded until the state budget comes out, but all information about the program can be obtained by calling the Huntingdon County Conservation District by calling Law at 627-1626, emailing them at roads@huntingdonconservation.org or by visiting their website at [www.huntingdoncd.org](http://www.huntingdoncd.org).

*Kylie can be reached at [khawn@huntingdondailynews.com](mailto:khawn@huntingdondailynews.com).*

See Roads

Page 3