

UTILIZATION OF ADDITIONAL HIGHWAY FUNDS
PROVIDED BY 1969 LEGISLATURE
(Panel Discussion—Part IV)

Comments by a County Commissioner

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COUNTIES APPLY FOR ARTERIAL ROAD FUNDS

Here are some figures which may indicate the attitude of county commissioners and municipal administrations toward the arterial board program authorized by the legislative act of 1969.

Speaking as a commissioner of Allen County, I will tell you in more detail how we are using the available funds in Allen County and what we plan for the immediate future. Some of you may be faced with the same problems that we have.

As of February 1st the board has received applications from 32 counties for arterial road funds. A total of 59 applications have been considered of which 53 were approved, four rejected and two are still pending. The total cost of the approved projects amount to \$4,193,590, which covers 45 miles of reconstruction, 2.7 miles of new construction and 21 bridges, in addition to 27.5 miles of signing and marking, nine rail crossing flashers, a feasibility study for a major project and four preliminary engineering projects covering three bridges and 9.56 miles of road.

Large Proportion of Funds go to Metropolitan Counties

I have prepared this map to show you more clearly just where the arterial road and street funds are being used. Applications have been received from counties shown in red. It is apparent from the map that funds are going largely into the metropolitan counties where traffic is heaviest and the need for highway improvement is greatest. This, I am sure, follows exactly the intent of the legislature in creating this program. It will be several years, however, before the full benefits of this program are realized by people in the counties involved.

Money Solves Pressing Traffic Problems

As a board member, I have been impressed by the manner in which ment, both rebuilding and new construction, and to establish priorities

county and municipal officials have used the opportunity created by the arterial road law to solve their most pressing traffic problems. Most of the applications have been well prepared with the necessary information properly documented. This makes the work of the board much easier. Right here I'd like to compliment Tippecanoe County. Whereas, among the 31 other counties making application, the highest number of projects was only three, here in Tippecanoe County they have filed eight requests which tells me that they are either in the middle of a massive traffic jam, or that they are a little faster on their feet than the rest of us.

EXAMPLE OF THE PROGRAMS USE

Identify Qualifying Roads

In Allen County we are concerned with roads rather than bridges. Our first move was to identify the county roads and the connecting city streets within the county and the connecting roads of adjoining counties that qualify under this program and where changes in traffic patterns have made improvements or new construction necessary.

Applying the specifications adopted by the board as the criteria for identifying arterial highways to the roads of Allen County, we made the determination that a total of 444 miles of road could properly be classified as arterial highways and 138 miles of collector roads come within the meaning of this law.

Evaluate Needs and Establish Priorities

Our next step was to evaluate the needs for changes and improve for the various projects. Here we naturally considered the traffic load of the highway, its present condition and its adequacy to handle normal and projected traffic. The list of roads resulting from our survey provides a realistic guide for all projects under the arterial road program in Allen County. We acted rather promptly last year when the law became effective and have two applications now approved and two road projects under contract, with one application pending at the board and one ready for filing. Work on four more applications is under way for filing early this year.

In addition to the road projects, we have made application for funds to cover a feasibility study involving the relocation of a major arterial road and construction of a new bridge. A number of other projects are now under consideration and some further applications will probably be filed this year.

SUMMARY

My observations lead me to the conclusion that county and municipal officials throughout the state are realizing their opportunity for highway improvements under the new arterial road and street program and are taking advantage of it. For the public generally, it certainly means better roads and streets in the areas of greatest traffic congestion and the solution of our most serious problems which come with the ever-increasing traffic load on our county roads and city streets.