Pickens roads get help for rough patch

Paving list up for council OK would improve 26 miles of 'fair' conditions

By Julie Howle
STAFF WRITER
jhowle@greenvillenews.com

PICKENS — Pickens County Council is expected to vote next week on a list of roads slated for improvements over the next 12 months.

The paving list, approved by the council's public service committee, recommends improvements on some 26 miles of roads at a cost of just over $1.8 million.

Council is expected to give final approval to the list when it meets on Monday.

County Administrator Chappell Hurst said work can start on the paving once County Council votes to accept the bids and said the list calls for repaving on 66 roads.

The work should be done by June 30, according to Hurst.

He said the county roads were assessed by an independent company at the end of 2006 and beginning of 2007. The roads were given ratings and grades from failed to excellent.

"We started with the failed roads first, which were the worst roads," Hurst said.

"We've been continuously paving, and now we're into what we term fair roads that aren't destroyed," he said. "They're passable, but they have cracks" and some potholes.

Hurst said most of the roads on the 2011 paving list are rated as fair.

The repaving includes shoulder work where road crews will make "the edge of the pavement equal to the dirt shoulder so that there's no crevasse or drop-off there," he said.

The list is broken down by council district, with 11 roads included in District 1; eight in District 2; 15 in District 3; nine in District 4; 13 in District 5; and 10 in District 6.

District 1 includes the Clemson area, while District 2 takes in the Six Mile and Central area; District 3, Pickens and northern parts of the county; District 4, the Liberty area; and District 5, Easley.

Councilman and committee chairman Tom Ponder said in District 6, which includes the Dacusville area, there are "some pretty dangerous situations."

He said the shoulder work is an important part of the road safety equation.

"Every time you pave, the (road surface) elevation is going up," he said. "We continually go up, which means we're either going to have to mill it eventually or we're going to have to continue to build the shoulder up."

The money for the paving comes from a $20 road fee residents pay as part of their vehicle taxes, Hurst said.

He said the county also put in extra money, about $1 million, two years ago from the general fund balance to further the paving efforts.

Hurst said 2007 was the first year the county started paving under the new evaluation system and said they have averaged about 25 miles paved a year, except in 2008, when they paved 54 miles because of the additional money.

Council chairman and committee member G. Neil Smith said the county has set up a system where a road can be reevaluated and changed in the lineup if necessary.

"The program is working because the complaints are way down," Smith said.

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