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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Commissioners: Tree trimming promotes safe travels

ROGERS COUNTY— It is that time of year again when Rogers County crews are trimming/removing trees and brush along the statutory right-of-way in all three districts enhancing public safety.

County commissioners and their foremen are the first called to respond to county road/bridge obstruction/outage issues, enabling crews to immediately restore access for emergency vehicles and motorists.

Over the next four to five weeks, drivers are encouraged to remain alert for stopped or slowed traffic, while flagging crews enforce an alternating traffic pattern.

This ongoing project is vital to road safety by creating a line of sight for motorists; lessening the chance of old/dead/ice-laden trees falling onto the road; lifting the tree canopy allowing school buses or large vehicles to pass under; providing recovery zone for drivers if they run off the roadway; allowing plowed snow to have a place to pile off the road keeping most of the road width available; and extending the useful life of roadway surface.

In the event of storms, ice or high-speed winds can down trees that could tie up crews for hours. Not only do they have to immediately move trees out of the road, but they also must circle back to dispose of the debris.

Rogers County Commissioner Dan DeLozier of District 1, said, “We stay on top of that job every year because in the Spring the tree branches start growing back out. So, while the leaves are off them, it makes it very easy for us to do the trimming.”

District 1 Foreman Teddy Noland said tree trimming and removal provides ‘daylighting’ on the roads in the event of wintry weather. “If the trees hang over the road, they can have snow or ice build-up that can break off and block the road. Keeping them cut back allows the sun to shine on the road, thawing the snow and ice much faster.”

Commissioner Chairman Steve Hendrix said his crew got an early start on this yearly project. His foreman, Benny King, said “We got started about a month ago and still have a lot to do,” he said.

In District 3, Commissioner Ron Burrows said the tree trimming process is never ending. “It's always ongoing. We live in green country, Oklahoma. The branches that we trimmed two years ago are ready to be trimmed again.”

School buses in District 3 are usually the first to report tree issues.

“Our biggest customer that we serve are the school buses. They let us know if the limbs are hitting the mirrors or if it's dead and hanging over the roadway. We really depend a lot on the school bus drivers to tell us the problem areas,” Burrows added.

Commissioners value certain times of the year to get critical things done leading up to various seasons. This aids in using the most efficient times to accomplish tasks that can't be performed at other times. Weather conditions can delay some of those tasks.

In addition to tree pruning/removal, some county roads in various districts will be “grinded down” in preparation for chip sealing in the Spring. This is an ideal time to prepare chip seal roads since “time” allows about four months of compacting the road done by drivers.

For county residents needing areas near the roadway or fence line cleared can contact the county barn in the district they reside in or by visiting www.rogerscounty.org.

