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Road and Bridge News June, 2016

Summer has finally arrived in Ouray County! This means warmer temperatures, hiking, biking, jeep trails, water recreation, and all sorts of other outdoor activities. The Road & Bridge Department looks forward to this time of year and the road maintenance projects that we have this summer. Some of those projects include: Mag Chloride application, opening jeep trails in the high mountain country, graveling roads, and culvert/drainage repairs. We have recently started applying Mag Chloride to county roads which will keep our mag crew busy for most of the summer.

As many Ouray County citizens are aware, the Road & Bridge Department has recently gone through an audit that was conducted by SGM, a private engineering company. The purpose of the audit was to evaluate the effectiveness of Road & Bridge activities, identify current and future Road & Bridge needs and to recommend improvements and solution-based planning for the Road & Bridge Department. Improving operational efficiencies will help the Department better serve the citizens of Ouray County and optimize funding. Several of the audit recommendations have been implemented. One of the recommendations was to hire a Road & Bridge Assistant Superintendent. Ouray County recruited and hired a very capable and talented individual for the position, Steven Calkins. Steven brings several years of Road & Bridge experience, skills and abilities to the table. He has a Bachelor's degree in Business Management, possesses a CDL license, and is MSHA and Flagger certified. He understands the nature of working for a small rural county and its special attributes and challenges. Ouray County welcomes Steven to the County Team.

Steven's position will provide assistance to the Superintendent as well as alleviate some of the workload of the Superintendent position. A major goal of this new position is to improve communication with the citizens of Ouray County, as well as within the Road & Bridge Department and with Road Committee.

Another improvement suggested in the SGM audit was to acquire newer equipment that is more reliable and cost effective to maintain. The acquisition of this new equipment will help improve efficiencies in labor by having less 'down-time' from equipment breakdown.

Ouray County recently solicited Requests for Proposals for a Tandem Axle Semi-Tractor. Award was made by the Board of County Commissioners in May and a purchase order has been issued for its acquisition. An additional Request for Proposals is currently underway for the purchase of two Belly Dump Trailers and a Front-End Loader. All of these equipment purchases will fulfill the capital equipment recommendations set forth in the audit for budget year 2016.

As a small rural county, the Road & Bridge department faces many challenges due to lack of financial resources, and limited staffing. We are tasked to find creative solutions to "doing more with less." The Road & Bridge Department is committed to providing excellent service to the citizens of Ouray County. Together with public support and patience, as well as the implementation of the Road & Bridge Audit we can make Ouray County roads enjoyable and safe. Speaking of enjoyable, have a great summer and enjoy this incredibly beautiful county and all that it has to offer. If there are any questions please feel free to contact the Road & Bridge Department at (970) 626-5391, and ask to speak to Chris Miller, Road Superintendent or Steven Calkins, Assistant Road Superintendent; or email them at cmiller@ouraycountyco.gov, or scalkins@ouraycountyco.gov.