



Road and Bridge News July, 2016

The Ouray County Road and Bridge Department's [Department(s)] mag chloride application season is coming to an end for the year. The County's mag chloride season is generally about a six week process and may vary depending on weather. This year took a little longer due to the heavy rains experienced in June. Each year the Department applies mag to its highest priority roads: 1, 24, 5, 14, 17, 23 as well as other lower priority roads. There have been a lot of questions concerning how the Department applies mag to County roads. The following is a brief explanation of the Department's mag application process.

There are six pieces of equipment and six operators that the Department uses in its mag application process, they are: a grader, roller, two water trucks, mag tanker, and a mag distributor. The process is simple, Step 1: a water truck sprays the road to minimize the dust and a grader follows cutting the road and working the material. This first step is then repeated. Step 2: the mag distributor applies a total of $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon per square yard every three tenths of a mile. After a grader has made a final pass on the road, the mag distributor makes two additional passes; one pass spraying mag at $\frac{1}{4}$ gallon per square yard, followed by a second pass spraying $\frac{1}{4}$ gallon per square yard. Lastly, a roller compacts the loose gravel that is mixed with mag chloride. After all this has been completed it takes 1-2 days before the road is completely dry. This technique has been used by the Department for many years and is common throughout other counties in Colorado.

Another question that comes up about the County's mag application process is: why are there still potholes in the road after mag has been applied? Answer: there is not enough gravel material or road base on many of the County roads. Without having a sufficient amount of road base on the road, the grader operator can only cut 1-2 inches of the road before impacting the sub-grade, which consists of bigger rocks. In addition, some of the potholes in the road may be below the 1-2 inches that the grader operator can cut. In a perfect scenario, the Department would add $\frac{3}{4}$ inch road base to the road to fill in the potholes before mag is applied. Unfortunately, the Department is unable to add the necessary gravel to many of the County roads due to the lack of revenue needed for crushing gravel. For additional questions about the mag chloride application process, please contact the County Road and 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.