

Turnout for Transportation Meeting
Wood County Highway Shop
September 29, 2016

Highlights of the meeting

- Lance Pliml, Local Government Institute Board of Directors member, County Board Chairman, told those assembled that the Local Government Institute website (<http://www.localgovinstitute.org/publications>) has a publication called "Filling Potholes: A New Look at Funding Local Transportation in Wisconsin" which lists 14 ways to help the transportation funding issue.
- Municipalities are replacing only a fraction of the roads that should be replaced in their jurisdictions. In some cases, the roads are on a 150 year cycle.
- Municipalities have large construction projects that should be done but have been put off due to funding issues. One problem is that the costs keep going up so a road that would have cost 1.3 million to reconstruct 10 years ago may cost close to \$2 million today.
- Some municipalities can only do a mile or so of asphalt overlays per year. They are relying more and more on shorter-term fixes such as sealcoats.
- One individual thought the State may like to know how much of the State aids are used for construction versus maintenance. Also, how much a municipality has to kick in from their local property taxes to cover the shortfall. One of the chairman said that his municipality kicks in 50% of their road maintenance costs.
- One municipality tried to pass a referendum for construction borrowing but it didn't pass.
- An engineer from a local firm told the group that design work for governmental units has declined dramatically. Local governments cannot afford to strengthen the roads.
- Comments were made that the Transportation Fund has been robbed to balance the State budget in other areas.
- The automatic gas tax indexing was cancelled and more fuel efficient vehicles spend less on gas and diesel.
- Money in Madison is being spent on programs that have proponents with a louder voice. Municipalities must be vocal with the legislators, either on the phone, or in person during Central Wisconsin Days. There was a proposal that a large group of interested persons should attend Central Wisconsin Days and, in small groups, visit with every legislator and voice the concerns of local governments.
- It was mentioned that locals know better how to spend monies given to them so the State should be more willing to distribute funds without red tape requirements.
- Pliml was asked about what happens next. He said that similar meetings are being held throughout the state. Some are being videotaped and those tapes will be included in an upcoming dvd. Also, the post-event reports from all the meetings will be compiled and the results will be shared with legislators.