

## OHIO'S ECONOMY IMPACTS ROADS

In recent articles, I have attempted to show you how the economy of Ohio can impact schools in various ways. Sometimes the hits are direct ones whenever budget cuts are enacted. At other times, the cuts result in subtle or indirect hits. The roads that our buses travel, along with all of you, benefit when Ohio's economy is good. At times like these, when Ohio's economy is not so good, our roads suffer.

I think that we all know and understand that there is less money for resurfacing roads than in the past. This is due not only to Ohio's budget woes, but also to the rising cost of materials. These same two elements (the economy and cost of materials) are also affecting road treatment for ice and snow. As our townships, villages, counties, and state have less and less operating money, road treatment is undoubtedly going to be reduced to some extent.

What does all of this have to do with schools? Simply stated, school districts rely heavily on the township, village, county, and state officials to treat or pre-treat roads in order for the school buses to be able to make their runs. Obviously, this can have an impact on my decision whether to delay the start of school or not, or whether to close school instead of delaying the start of the school day. It always comes down to what we think we can do with a high level of safety in mind. At times, this can also mean that there will probably be times when school is in session, but we have some roads that our buses will not travel due to safety concerns.

Having shared this information with you, I want to again express my thanks to our state, county, township, and village officials who are charged with making our roadways drivable. They take this huge responsibility seriously. While everyone's budget may be hurting right now, I know that these good people will continue to serve us all to the level that they can afford to do so. In the meantime, we can help by simply slowing down and not being in such a hurry.

The advent of the 2009 calendar year will probably bring continued uncertainty when it comes to the economy and school finances in general. Virtually all Boards of Education may very well be faced with some tough decisions. This would include our own Board of Education. Some decisions may not only be tough ones, but they may be unpopular ones. All decisions will be made based upon what this elected body feels are the best services that can be provided for the students of the Adams County/Ohio Valley School District while maintaining a business operation that runs in the black, which we are required to do by law. It is our responsibility to plan for the worst while hoping for the best. In this unstable time of school funding, it is much better to be proactive than to sit back and wait for some sort of miracle and then be forced to be reactive.

As we close out the year 2008 and look forward to 2009, I urge you to be supportive of the district and the board members as we continue to explore ways to make the dollars that we have stretch as far as we can. We will look at everything from the standpoint of thriftiness in the hopes of surviving this economic and funding firestorm before (and, hopefully, without) having to ask voters for more operating money.

By the way, January is also School Board Recognition Month. If you happen to see or talk to any of our board members, be sure to thank them for the outstanding work that they do and tough decisions that they are charged to make. Being a good school board member is never an easy job, but in times like these, it can certainly be even more of a challenging position. Please have a safe and Happy New Year!

If you have any questions concerning this or any article, feel free to contact me at 544-5586.  
Thank you.

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Superintendent