

# Citizen complains about northwest county roads

By Tom Betz  
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A citizen was the first person at the Sherman County commission meeting on Monday morning and wanted to complain about the roads in the northwest part of the county, Larry Enfield, who farms northwest of Ruleton, was at the meeting and question Curt Way, public works manager, about the roads.

“Some friends and I loaded up for a Sunday afternoon drive,” Enfield said, “and drove around the county. “We felt the roads in the northwest part of the county were the worst we drove on.”

Enfield asked Way if he was going to put gravel on the roads. Way said he had to get a bridge fixed on a road south east of town and would then move up to work on the roads north of Kanorado. He said the bridge was a priority, and the chip sealing project had slowed the county down by a couple of weeks.

Way said Enfield had stopped him early in the summer and told Way he thought the roads were good, and he was glad to see the county working on them.”

Enfield said he did not say the

roads were good, but he was glad to see the county up working on the roads. However, he said he expected something to happen and it did not all summer.

Enfield asked about compacting the dirt on the roads when gravel is put on to incorporate it better into the surface.

Way said the county used to do more incorporation when the state was involved, but that has not been in more than 13 years since he has been working. Way said the county does not have the compaction equipment. He said for years and years they have used the semi’s to throw the gravel out and then driving on it and blading is how they have incorporated it in.

Enfield asked if road 75 was going to get gravel.

Way said they will all get gravel eventually, but cannot give a time-frame as to when that will be done.

“Do you understand my complaint,” Enfield said. “I have been asking for years for that road to get fixed. I thought that was going to happen this summer but nothing has been done.”

Way said it has been so dry lately all the county can do is shoulder up a

road because anything else is going to be powder because it is so dry.

“That is all I wanted to know,” Enfield said. “I want you guys (commissioners) to know that if my road doesn’t get fixed I am going to pay my taxes under protest. I am going to have the state board come out and see why I am paying the taxes under protests. I have taken a lot of photos of the roads. I am tired of excuses I want to see some action.”

Commissioner Chuck Thomas said the people around Kanorado wanted their roads graveled too and they were never graveled in years and years so we bought the extra equipment and started working our way around.

Commissioner Cynthia Strnad said, “I do think Larry has a point. I have been on so many country roads in the last month, I wished I could be on a cement super highway somewhere. In my estimation what I have seen countywide over the last month of driving the roads in the area (northwest part of county) are the worst in the county.”

Thomas said, “The guys in the north part of the county told us the same thing.”

“They are bad, but I have been

pretty much over the whole county,” Strnad said. “I have had people call and ask me to come look at their road with them. I have been on many roads and the person will say, ‘but you haven’t seen mine.’ I’ve looked at roads with farmers getting in my pickup and going. Probably the worst roads I’ve seen are up in that area. I would not want to need emergency equipment if I lived up there.”

“I am not trying to be a bad ass,” Enfield said. “Curt here is the thing, this job is your livelihood just as farming is my livelihood, and I cannot get around the roads without tearing my equipment up and screwing with my livelihood. I am not trying to come in here and be mean about it, but I am just sick of hearing the excuses for years and nothing is happening.”

Thomas asked Way how many miles of road the county gravels in a day.

Way said it depends on the run , but they can usually get seven loads each truck. It takes 300 yards a mile on the road and each load is 20 yards so it takes 15 loads, he said.

“If they get a mile or two miles done that is going to be the size of

it,” he said. “It depends on how far they are from the gravel pit. If they can make some short runs with one truck and one doing the longer run. It takes 15 loads per mile and it takes a long time to get them graveled. That is just the way it is. Everyone wants more. Its like the farmers planting in the right of ways that causes a lot of problems too.”

Thomas said, “with this dry weather I drove road County Road 32 north past the church. I know it has been graveled and there is good gravel on there, but it is so dry now it is getting washboard from the dry weather.”

“And from the traffic,” Way said.

Thomas said the dry weather is causing problems on the other end of the spectrum.

“On a little different subject,” Commissioner Max Linin asked Way, “what did you tell us when I asked about shouldering. How much did you tell us you could do in a day or so compared to how long it takes to elevate a road.”

Way said he was talking about a small elevation along the shoulder would take two days to do a mile.

“Why don’t we do like surround-

ing areas and come in the spring when there is moisture and tip those blades down and pull the dirt up,” Strnad said. “You say we get secondary ditches, but if we pulled that curb and gutter off the secondary ditch is better than no ditch at all.”

“What happens,” Way said, “as I explained the other day is it will get your road wider. We do that on some of them, but they have a distinct shoulder line when we get those lips on there. We do that on several of them.

“The vegetation is a problem in the spring when we are trying to do the shoulder work with all the miles we have your vegetation gets to be a problem as it grows and you can’t pull that out there in that dirt or you are going to have dry dirt and there won’t be any compaction. When the grass and weeds start coming on you just as well stay out of it. It will not be good to have dry dirt up there.”

Enfield turned to the question of taxes and after he left the meeting the commissioners went into a closed door session and when they came out it was a 2-1 commissioner vote to fire Way.

## Changes made at county department

COUNTY, from Page 1

“We want it to be a county shop and not a road and bridge shop,” Strnad said. “We want checks and balances on oil changes and other equipment. We don’t just want the operator to be the sole responsible person for servicing the equipment.”

“That is something we can do,” Vandiver said.

Thomas said Vandiver will have to be head of the shop too.

“That is part of the job anyway,” Vandiver said.

“It is,” Thomas said, “but I guess what I mean is if you want somebody to take care of things you are going to have to appoint somebody,

as temporary.”

“Another personal recommendation,” Strnad said. “If you have a mechanic with more experience than another mechanic I think the lesser experienced mechanic is the one who does the running around. I believe I have been told throughout the community that almost every place where we purchase products is more than happy to deliver. It may not be within 10 minutes, but they will be happy to deliver. That can cut down and make us a bit more efficient.

“We also determined all the vehicles will stay at the shop. I think we are changing the way people are fueling in the morning. We are going to change that. You would keep your

vehicle because you truly are on call all the time. At this point no other single person will have a pickup to take home.”

“When do you want that to take effect,” Vandiver said.

“As soon as possible,” Strnad said.

The commissioners suggested Vandiver might want to hold a staff meeting that afternoon to talk to the other employees.

“We will probably do that,” Vandiver said. “Some of these changes you are asking for are going take a little bit of time.”

Linin said we understand and Strnad agreed.

## Top two at road and bridge fired

FIRING, from Page 1

truck without any oil in the engine. It seized up after 12 minutes and the engine was ruined.

Way told the commissioners that Steve was taking care of the situation, and the commissioners suggested there be a change in policy to have a mechanic assist or supervise the servicing of vehicles.

The commissioners asked to have Butch Vandiver, road and bridge foreman, come to the meeting later in the morning.

“Some changes have been made in your department today,” Thomas said.

Vandiver said he had been out in the county all day.

Thomas said that Way and Goodman had been terminated and asked Vandiver if he was willing to step up and take Way’s job temporarily until someone is hired.

“I can do that,” Vandiver said.

“That is what we wanted to know,” Thomas said.

“Just so I know,” Vandiver said, “what do you want from me.”

“All we want from you at this point is to carry on the projects that need to be done on the roads and bridges,” Strnad said.

Thomas agreed saying Vandiver was to keep going on the existing projects.

Linin asked if there was any reporting type stuff that has to be done.

“I know about that,” Vandiver said.

Strnad said the county has that firm out of Colorado that does the big stuff on the landfill.

American Environmental is the company Thomas said.

“We will have to talk about your compensation as well,” Linin said.

“We can deal with that later,” Vandiver said.

“We have not set in stone what the future plan is going to be,” Strnad said. “There will be advertising for the position within the system and

out of the system. We are not sure what credentialing we want.”

Before talking to Vandiver about the future direction of the department Strnad asked Vandiver to assist when Goodman was clearing out his tools.

“Curt and Steve will be leaving the premises later today,” Strnad said. “We have a list of Steve’s tools he has provided into the shop. The sheriff will provide the necessary legal standby if you could go through the list of tools with Steve and make sure you are comfortable and he is comfortable that it matches the list.”

Strnad told Vandiver “If anybody within the system is angry, upset would you have them call one of us or the county attorney. If anyone in the public has concerns about what is happening have them call one of us.”

“Any questions you have for me,” Vandiver said.

Thomas said he did not.

## Tornado slides past town on Tuesday

STORM, from Page 1

crossed K-27 north of town between County Road 68 and 69. The tornado started to turn southeast, and was spotted about 7 miles northeast of town at 8:39 p.m. At 8:52 p.m. a storm chaser spotted the tornado about 6 miles north of Edson.

Storm spotters reported heavy rain and hail at the Edson exit area on I-70 with some hail as big as a quarter to half-dollar, but much of it was smaller like dime size. At times the hail was heavy and almost covered the highway, but by 9 p.m. the storm had moved further to the southeast and the hail had nearly stopped.

State troopers and Sherman

County Sheriff’s deputies were out watching the traffic on I-70, and as the storm began to lessen led a convoy of trucks and cars slowly east on I-70 until they got past the storm area.

The storm continued to move southeast missing Brewster and into southern Thomas County and into Logan County and later in the evenings the National Weather Service had issued tornado warnings in southern Thomas and then into Logan County, but no other reports of damage were received.

Moisture from the storm varied around the area, but Goodland reported .14 inches for the night, which is the total for September. As of Tuesday the moisture total for

the year was 17.41 and the average for that date was 16.99 making the moisture .42 ahead of average.

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