

# Town of Rhinebeck Highway Department

Newsletter

Kathy Kinsella, Superintendent

Winter 2008

Bob Wyant, Foreman

## SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy New Year! I hope this finds you healthy and happy as we begin 2008.

2007 was a busy year at the Town of Rhinebeck Highway Department. In addition to our on-going maintenance and repair work like filling potholes, maintaining drainage basins and pipes, replacing and maintaining road signage and guiderail, clearing traffic or visual obstructions, snow plowing and ice control, road sweeping, roadside mowing, and equipment maintenance, we completed several major projects and even dealt with a federal disaster.

We completed the reconstruction of Fox Hollow Bridge, dealt with several major storms (including the April storm and flood that resulted in our Town being included in a federal disaster declaration), reinforced the road bases on Wheeler Road and Lower Hook Road, implemented safety improvements, including structural improvements and a complete resurfacing on Mt. Rutsen Road (see page two).

We also trained the entire crew in emergency CPR and AED (heart defibrillators) use as well as completing Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) training and held a bike rodeo for youth.

As always, please do not hesitate to let us know if there is any condition that needs our attention or if you have any questions about the work we are doing. Our phone number is 845-876-6263 and our e-mail address is [rhinebeckroads@hvc.rr.com](mailto:rhinebeckroads@hvc.rr.com)

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## NEW DWI LAWS IN NEW YORK STATE

In the last two years, New York has passed tough new legislation against drunk driving. On November 1, 2007, new felony penalties for aggravated vehicular homicide and aggravated vehicular assault went into effect. These allow judges to put drunk drivers in jail for up to 25 years in cases involving vehicular homicide and 15 years in cases involving vehicular assault.

Legislation passed in 2006 included tougher penalties for those who refuse to take a police-administered breathalyzer test, and a requirement that offenders with a blood alcohol content of above .18 (well above the .08 threshold that defines intoxication) install an ignition interlock system while they are on probation.

In addition, the law requires that every person arrested for driving while intoxicated be screened or assessed for a drug or alcohol abuse problem before their case is resolved. Drug treatment is mandatory for those who test positive and are not sentenced to jail.

463 New Yorkers were killed by drunk drivers in 2006. That is down 5% from 2005. 13,000 people were killed across the United States in 2006.

(Sources: New York State Legislature On-line bill search and Automobile Club of New York)

On behalf of the entire department, we look forward to serving you in 2008.

Sincerely,  
*Kathy Kinsella*  
Highway Superintendent

## NEW WEBSITE!

Check out the Highway Department page on Rhinebeck's new and improved website at:

[www.rhinebeck-ny.gov](http://www.rhinebeck-ny.gov)

### **DID YOU KNOW THAT?**

A car traveling at 65 mph travels 95 feet in one second. (Source: AAA)

The safest day of the week for driving (fewest accidents) is Tuesday. (Source: AAA)

U.S. residents throw away about 100 billion plastic bags each year, most of which are made with petroleum. That is equivalent to dumping almost 12 million barrels of oil. (Source: Salon.com)

### **MT. RUTSEN ROAD UPDATE**

I am pleased to report that the Highway Department received much positive feedback regarding our safety improvements on Mt. Rutsen Road. In addition to addressing structural issues and resurfacing the road with a skid resistant microsurfacing, there have been some changes to traffic signage. One significant signage change was the upgrading of the traffic control at the intersection of Mt Rutsen Road and River Road, heading north.

Since Mt. Rutsen Road is a town road and River Road is a County road, the County has jurisdiction over the signage at the intersection. I requested that the County review the intersection to determine if the Yield that was in place was adequate or if there should be an upgrade to a Stop. As a result of its review, the County determined that a Stop sign was in order and made the change. Driver response to the change has been overwhelmingly supportive.

The County has also agreed to review the intersection for a possible reconfiguration. They will study the intersection, conduct cost analysis, and let us know their determination. It has been represented that this will take a while and that a project would not be slated for anytime soon. It is promising though, that they have agreed to look at it.

The Town has also filed an application with the New York State Department of Transportation, asking that it consider reducing the speed limit on Mt. Rutsen Road from its current 40 mph to 35 mph. Towns do not set their own speed limits (unless they have a population over 50,000), NYSDOT does. The town presented a supporting engineering study, supporting its request.

Mt. Rutsen's resurfacing is eligible for federal funding under the Consolidated Highway Improvement Program (CHIPs). I have filed for reimbursement for over \$82,000 of our cost to improve this road.

Again, I thank everyone who has taken the time to share their feedback regarding changes on Mt. Rutsen Road. Your comments are helpful in helping us gauge the success of our projects and in planning future projects.

### **FACT OR FICTION?**

Folklore has it that Hogs Bridge (as you cross from Old Montgomery Road to Old Post and Mt. Rutsen Roads) got its name because the first traffic to pass on the original bridge was a herd of hogs.

Back issues of the Highway Department newsletter are available on request.  
Please call 845-876-6263 or e-mail [rhinebeckroads@hvc.rr.com](mailto:rhinebeckroads@hvc.rr.com)

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