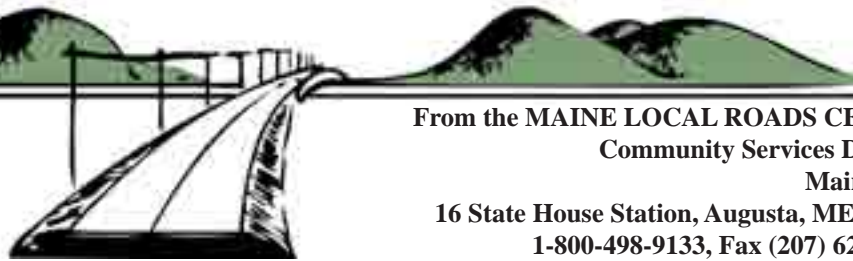




# “MAINE LOCAL ROADS NEWS”

Winter 2007/2008

A Newsletter to Assist Maine Towns in Dealing with Local Transportation Concerns



From the MAINE LOCAL ROADS CENTER  
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Feel free to call us with your road questions



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## WINTER is almost over, but . . . . . here comes MUD Season



This winter will go down as one of the “*Good Ole Maine Winters*” that were fairly common several decades ago. Unlike the winters of recent years, this winter provided plenty of snow around the entire state, lots of overtime for weary plow drivers, and many miles of cracked and heaved roads. It is plainly evident now by driving anywhere on many state and local roads. It is a constant challenge to avoid potholes, giant cracks, uneven ruts, and big frost heaves. We all hope that many of these problem areas will “settle down” after the Spring thaw and provide decent road surfaces again.

In the meantime, mud season will be here shortly and all roads will be in their weakest state of the year. Depending on the thawing season and the amount of rain, all paved roads and gravel roads that never were really built correctly will be weak and still have to endure the loads imposed by cars and trucks. Thus, the need to restrict heavy loads from roads by “posting” roads to certain weights. The true impact on a road is determined from the “pressure” exerted from axles and not the gross vehicle weight of a vehicle. In other words, 22,000 pounds on 2 axles causes a lot more damage to a road than 22,000 pounds on 3 or 4 axles. That is simply because there are more “pounds per square inch” on the road from the 2 axle vehicle than the 3 axle vehicle.

Posting a road with the typical orange signs that say “Heavy Loads Limited” is a common practice by MaineDOT and many towns and cities. No one wants to restrict the free flow of commerce but it becomes a fact of life in Maine if government wants to protect its road investments. With rising prices, declining revenue sources, and more traffic, the need to post roads will continue for a very long time. A community can “soften the blow” by 1) posting only those roads that are necessary to post, 2) post roads from before thaw to just after complete thawing and draining, 3) get the word out ahead of time to the driving public, especially to trucking firms, and 4) make sure the town/city has a proper traffic ordinance to enforce its restrictions. There are still many towns in Maine who put up the orange signs but have no local ordinance on the books to enforce it. If the town is challenged by a violator and the town has no ordinance, then the violator will walk away with no penalties. Having a good ordinance in place is critical to a successful and enforceable posting program.

Much more info on posting roads and how loads affect roads, including a sample ordinance, can be obtained from the Center or it can be found on the website at:

[http://www.state.me.us/mdot/mlrc/traffic-issues/speed-limit\\_heavy-loads.php](http://www.state.me.us/mdot/mlrc/traffic-issues/speed-limit_heavy-loads.php)