



# Union County Engineer's *2023 Annual Report*

**Jeff Stauch, County Engineer**

I am pleased to provide the summary of our organization's activities for 2023. The report format includes building and development highlights, our environmental engineering responsibilities, and a listing of our road and bridge projects throughout the year. It also provides details of the budget that drives the County Engineer operation, and outlines some of the challenges we've identified for the coming years.

It was an exceptionally busy year for our improvements placed by contractors. Large bridge replacements on Bitler Rd. and Yearsley Rd. were built for a combined total of around \$2.50 million. Two separate paving contracts resurfaced 13.43 miles for a combined price tag of \$4.33 million. Grant dollars totaling \$4.18 million helped to make the four significant contract projects possible. Annual safety projects involving roadside guardrail upgrades and pavement striping were also placed in various locations across our county.

Our staff assisted with miscellaneous project assignments and partnerships with other area agencies. Included were joint efforts with the City of Dublin on the widening of Hyland-Croy Road which kicked off last year and is to be finished this summer. Our office managed the funding components and roadway improvements along Industrial Pkwy. which serve the new Scotts warehouse facility. Coordination with our partners at the Ohio Department of Transportation continued with multiple projects in the queue slated for construction in the near future. And we assisted Union Soil & Water staff with the Morris-Beery petitioned ditch drainage processes and improvements south of Richwood.

Work continued on road usage agreements for the solar farm construction traffic in the northwest area of the county. Union Solar, located in York and Washington townships, is nearing completion and will have contributed around \$750,000 towards road work commitments across area routes. Discussions on the agreement with Cadence Solar continue, with sites in Liberty and York townships, as we identify the necessary road upgrades across their construction footprint. They plan to begin work later this year.

Our Operations group provided the usual annual maintenance tasks of four rounds of roadside mowing, pavement repairs, culvert replacements, and tree removals. They placed 128 miles of chip-seal on northern county and township roadways, which is our largest annual self-performed expenditure, totaling \$1.83 million. Crews replaced six small bridges in just a four-month period.

These same employees, who are directly responsible for our in-house construction tasks, transition to snow removal once the asphalt plants close for the season. We took another look at our approach to crew shift options for our growing area. The challenges for us can be framed by a few key issues: increasing traffic volumes, high mileages to cover, and impacts on available construction dollars if

we expand our snowplowing efforts. Crews currently cover 18 plow zones, consisting of 473 county road miles (6th most in Ohio) and 59 township miles, which requires an average of almost 4 hours to complete a round in a single zone. The state average per county is only 331 miles, meaning we have the unique challenge of more miles, in a high-growth county, with a medium sized county budget. If we were to add 6 plow drivers for a partial second shift for main routes only, the labor and

benefit cost would be in the neighborhood of \$365,000 annually. If we were to add 6 plow trucks to the mix to increase our zones and in turn reduce our time for coverage, we'd have to find another \$1.15 million to add to our fleet. While we would love to expand our snow and ice program beyond our current single shifts, it would just be too impactful to our annual maintenance and construction budget. For now we'll stay the course and hope for continued reasonable winters.

The summary reporting section of 2023's Building Department statistics captures the continued pace and volume of vertical construction locally. The combined 'self-reported' valuation for commercial and residential builds for last year totaled (conservatively) over \$980,000,000!



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## County Engineer

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Our growing team worked to revamp our permit fee structure and continue refinements to our online permit process, helping to provide better customer service. And a primary goal for 2024 will include electronic plan reviews, providing more efficiencies for our group and their customers.

A related component of this growth lies behind the scenes with our tax mapping department folks. They issued over 2600 new addresses last year, reviewed over 2200 deeds, and approved 300 new surveys. The hours spent on these reviews and assisting the local real estate professionals help to ensure that accurate property records are in place for years to come.

As mentioned before, this report connects the costs for putting our various improvements in place. There will never be enough funds to accomplish all our goals or project needs. As with all businesses, it becomes an exercise in prioritization. But the concerns with falling behind are intensifying, especially in our central Ohio region. We are blessed to be in a growing area with a strong economy, and we have been labeled as one of the top 3 fastest growing counties for...well, I've lost track. We have increasingly seen direct impacts to our material costs and area contractor workloads. The Intel effect is certainly partially responsible. Projects that used to draw bids from 4 or 5 contractors may now only see 1 or 2, which reduces that competitive benefit for pricing. Our revenue growth has flattened to less than 1% the last two years, after significantly helpful bumps between 2019-2021 (thanks to gas tax and license fee increases). Historically our annual revenues have done a decent job of allowing us to cover many of our core tasks of road and bridge maintenance: an annual paving program, a consistent bridge replacement program, extensive chip-sealing each year, an occasional road widening, etc. But as the needs for more intense expenditures come online—major intersection improvements or lane additions or \$1.0 + million bridge replacements—this core work will suffer. Because of the busy (and expensive) 2023 work program and this year's planned major roundabout addition on Industrial Parkway, we've had to postpone a large bridge rehabilitation and dial back some needed paving. We have limited tools at this point to counter the challenges. Fortunately, we have continued to build on our philosophy of doing as much work in-house as possible. And last year the Statehouse finally increased the dollar limits under which we can self-perform the work, and added annual inflationary increases so we are less likely to fall behind again.

The need for these major, more expensive road projects is largely driven by development in areas of the county. Im-

proved intersections, widened roadways, and in some instances new roads are needed to safely handle our increased traffic. I have explained our philosophy for development impacts within this space in past years. We continue to require developers to assist with fair cost shares for needed improvements resulting from their increased traffic additions. These contributions typically do not completely cover the cost of a major project, but collectively they go a long way towards getting the improvement in place. And it also provides a fairer deal for our taxpayers who are using these same area roadways. Ohio law does provide a tool that allows tax dollars to be redirected over time to infrastructure, Tax Increment Financing (TIFs), taking advantage of increased property values in developing areas. Some of our roads have benefitted from TIFs in isolated areas of Union County in recent years. Unfortunately, Ohio law provides a very liberal interpretation of what an eligible use is for those redirected property taxes. Some development proposals in the southeastern portion of our county have suggested that these TIF dollars should help fund their internal roads or turn-lanes, making the concept part of their financing playbook. Our office and other county officials have a very different opinion on how those funds should be directed in the future. While TIFs can and will be an immense help in getting our future high-end projects built, they definitely need to be directed to improvements that benefit the majority of our traveling public. They should not be used to help reduce a developer's project cost or serve only a very limited number of users. We work with some very professional and reasonable development teams that understand their impacts and our challenges. We will continue to work towards the goal of fair and consistent public-private partnerships that benefit the public, since the public funds the largest share of our work.

Whether it be the day-to-day maintenance items across our operation, dealing with a snowfall, helping answer a citizen's question, or helping to troubleshoot their drainage issue, or even planning long-term roadway additions that will improve our road network for many years to come, we will keep chipping away at all of it as an organization. We will be doing our best to prioritize and make decisions, little or big, that represent our office and public favorably, for the coming year and in many cases for decades into the future. Thanks for taking some time to have a look at our report, and here's to a productive 2024!



Jeff Stauch, Union County Engineer

## WORK BY COUNTY FORCES

### Snow and Ice Control

**\$190,179**

- \$65,029.79 labor cost
- \$46,733.56 equipment cost
- 1,222 tons of salt
- \$78,416.08 material cost

### Durapatcher

**\$25,221**

- 8,916 gallons RS-2 Liquid Asphalt
- 346.11 tons #8 Stone

### Grader Patching

**\$152,521**

- 1,794.36 tons of hot mix asphalt

### Road Sign Material

**\$37,292**

- 1,523 signs in the sign inventory

### Tree and Brush Removal

**\$222,863**

- \$183,138.34 labor cost
- \$39,725.09 equipment cost

### Chip Seal (labor, equipment, and material)

**\$1,833,962**

- 588,882.42 gallons of asphalt and 13,855 tons of stone
- 93.158 miles of county roads
- 35.056 miles of township roads



### Roadside Mowing (4 rounds)

**\$226,464**

- 4,080 total miles mowed
- \$119,151.15 labor cost
- \$107,312.53 equipment cost

## SMALL BRIDGE AND CULVERT WORK

### Le Masters Road Small Bridge Replacement

CR 175-0.986

**Force Work Labor Cost**  
7 beams – B17-48 x 28'

**\$63,942**  
**\$73,150**

### Dover-County Line Road Small Bridge Replacement

CR 135A-1.467

**Force Work Labor Cost**  
7 beams – B12-48 x 31'

**\$15,364**  
**\$73,850**



### Hillview Road Small Bridge Replacement

CR 128A-1.043

**Force Work Labor Cost**  
48 linear feet of 10' x 4' 4 sided box culvert

**\$8,649**  
**\$48,720**

### Butler Avenue Small Bridge Replacement

CR 3-0.266

**Force Work Labor Cost**  
60 linear feet of 12' x 6' 4 sided box culvert

**\$16,510**  
**\$75,000**

### Maple Dell Road Small Bridge Replacement

CR 182-0.640

**Force Work Labor Cost**  
63 linear feet of 14' x 4' 4 sided box culvert

**\$10,794**  
**\$99,225**

### Rapp-Dean Road Small Bridge Replacement

CR 229D-2.152

**Force Work Labor Cost**  
48 linear feet of 10' x 6' 4 sided box culvert

**\$21,476**  
**\$55,680**



## WORK BY CONTRACT

### LARGE BRIDGE PROJECTS

#### CR-222D Yearsley Road Bridge Replacement

*Contractor: George J. Igel & Co., Inc.*

**Construction Cost:** \$1,400,793  
**OPWC Grant:** \$500,000  
**Local Share:** \*\$900,793

Work was completed by George J. Igel & Company to replace the Yearsley Road Bridge spanning Bokes Creek. They completed a 3-span, 143' concrete slab on concrete abutments/piers supported by steel piling.



#### TR294-0.29 Bitler Road Bridge Replacement

*Contractor: R&I Construction, Inc.*

**Construction Cost:** \$1,103,669  
**FHWA Grant:** \$1,103,669  
**Local Share:** \$0

R&I Construction worked to modernize and replace the Bitler Road Bridge also spanning Bokes Creek. The new bridge is a 2-span, 120' concrete box beam with a composite deck, on concrete abutments/piers supported by concrete drilled shafts.



## WORK BY CONTRACT

### Guardrail Upgrade Program

Contractor: *MP Dory*

Over 500 linear feet of roadway guardrail and bridge railing were upgraded, along with 50 new end treatments at 16 different sites.

**Construction Cost: \*\$239,635**

### Pavement Marking Program

Contractor: *The Aero-Mark Company*

112 miles of centerline; 116 miles of edgeline; 10 railroad crossing symbols; 1 school symbol

**Construction Cost: \*\$133,009**



### Morris-Beery Ditch Improvement

Contractor: *Bahan Farms Excavating*  
Leesburg and Claibourne Townships

This petition ditch project included open ditch and tile lateral drainage improvements, along with the placement of three concrete structures. The County Engineer's Office partnered with the Union Soil and Water Conservation District staff on managing the project.

**Construction Cost: \$408,040**

## HOT MIX RESURFACING PROJECTS

### Honda Parkway & Northwest Parkway

Contractor: *The Shelly Company*

5.18 miles Northwest Parkway  
8.25 lane miles Honda Parkway

<b>Construction Cost:</b>	<b>\$2,840,392</b>
FHWA Grant	\$2,000,000
<b>Local Share:</b>	<b>*\$840,392</b>



### Jerome Road & Homer Road

Contractor: *The Shelly Company*

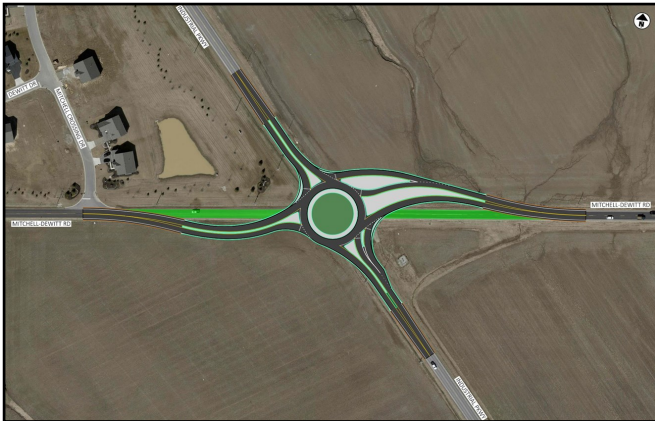
3.98 miles Jerome Road, 1.94 miles Homer Road, 0.17 miles Heritage Drive, 0.23 miles Montgomery Road

<b>Construction Cost:</b>	<b>\$1,614,920</b>
Jerome Township	\$126,057
OPWC Grant	\$550,000
<b>Local Share:</b>	<b>*\$938,863</b>

\* Portions of local shares were furnished by the Sales Tax Levy

## ROUNABOUT UPDATE

We are pleased to provide an update on the status of the much-anticipated roundabout project at the intersection of Mitchell-Dewitt and Industrial Parkway. We are excited to announce that Trucco Construction Company, Inc. has been awarded the construction contract for \$3,707,483. Despite the increased cost, we believe this investment is crucial for the long-term safety and efficiency of both roadway corridors. Construction is slated to commence in early summer, with a targeted completion date of mid-August 2024. We appreciate your continued patience and support as we work towards enhancing the overall traffic performance and safety of our growing community. Stay tuned for further updates as we embark on this significant infrastructure improvement project.



## MISCELLANEOUS STATS

- Driveway permits issued 66
- Number of addresses issued 2,649
  - Unincorporated areas 444
  - Incorporated areas—Union County 1,926
  - Incorporated areas—Madison County 279
- Total property transfers 2,838
- New deed parcels 223
- Existing deeds checked 1,933
  - Foreclosure reviews 53
  - Sheriff deed reviews 10
- Total property splits and resurveys 327
  - New property surveys 302
  - New subdivision approvals 25
- Survey plats recorded 164
- Utility permits issued 117
- Overweight vehicle hauling permits issued 447
- Work order requests completed 81
- Miles of county roads maintained 470
- County maintained bridges 334
- Sanitary Sewer Customers 615
- Received \$120,000 in funding assistance from townships.
 

Darby	\$70,000	Washington	\$25,000
Jackson	\$25,000		

## BUILDING DEPARTMENT

In 2023, our bustling building department experienced significant growth, mirroring the expansion within the county itself. The year-end statistics showcase the dynamic nature of our department's operations, with a total residential building fees revenue of \$1,128,825 and commercial building fees reaching \$1,238,839. We issued a total of 1,585 residential permits, including 584 new single-family homes, 268 additions or alterations, and 733 permits for various other residential projects. The cumulative valuation of these residential endeavors amounted to an impressive \$285,801,358. Meanwhile, the department processed 404 commercial permits, featuring 47 new buildings, 92 additions or alterations, and 265 permits for other commercial projects, culminating in a valuation of \$698,880,682. Notably, our team achieved remarkable efficiency with plan review processes completed in less than 20 calendar days and a commendable inspection rate of 15.4 inspections per day per inspector. Embracing the goal of ensuring safety, sanitation, efficiency, and accessibility, our rejection rate remained at a low 18%, a testament to our commitment to quality service.

NEW SINGLE FAMILY HOMES	ADDITIONS/ ALTERATIONS	ALL OTHER PERMITS	TOTAL RESIDENTIAL PERMITS	VALUATION	INSPECTIONS COMPLETED
584	268	733	1,585	\$285,801,358	15,372
NEW COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS	ADDITIONS/ ALTERATIONS	ALL OTHER PERMITS	TOTAL COMMERCIAL PERMITS	VALUATION	INSPECTIONS COMPLETED
47	92	265	404	\$698,880,682	3,395

**NEW VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT**

Single Axle Dump Truck (used) **\$125,000**

Diamond mower **\$19,170**

John Deere Motor Grader (2nd payment) **\$50,649**



2021 Virnig Snow Pusher **\$4,190**

2022 Diamond Mower **\$14,980**

(2) JD Flex Wing Mowers **\$30,865**

F-350 Crew Cab **\$56,455**

(2) Flex Wing Mowers **\$33,200**

Hot Mix Patching Trailer **\$50,100**

(2) Mowing Tractors **\$86,200**

2020 Kobelco Excavator (third payment) **\$34,541**

John Deere Loader (second payment) **\$32,950**

Cat 308 Mini Hydraulic Excavator **\$117,687**



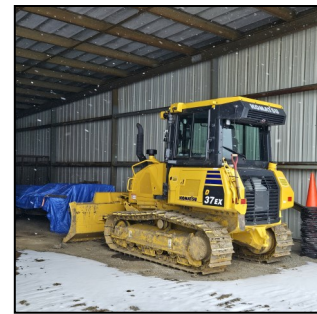
F-350 Cab & Chassis **\$44,420**

Lowboy Semi-Trailer **\$103,465**

Superior Road Broom **\$83,986**

Computer for tar distributor **\$7,752**

Komatsu Bulldozer **\$125,957**



Plow blades & blade Savers **\$4,300**

Rigging gear **\$4,225**

**2023 NEW EMPLOYEES**



**Justin Alloway**  
Maintenance Worker 2  
Hired 10/3/23



**Payton Bake**  
Administrative Support  
Hired 7/11/23



**Ashley Kerwood**  
Commercial Plans Examiner  
Hired 9/29/23



**Richard Kurtz**  
Mapping Assistant  
Hired 2/6/23



**Dean Otworth**  
Project Engineer  
Hired 7/10/23



**Rick Pickering**  
Construction Inspector  
Hired 6/26/23

Union County Engineer  
 Jeff Stauch, PE/PS  
 233 West Sixth Street  
 Marysville, Ohio 43040

**Administrative Office**

P: (937) 645-3021  
 unioncountyohio.gov/engineer

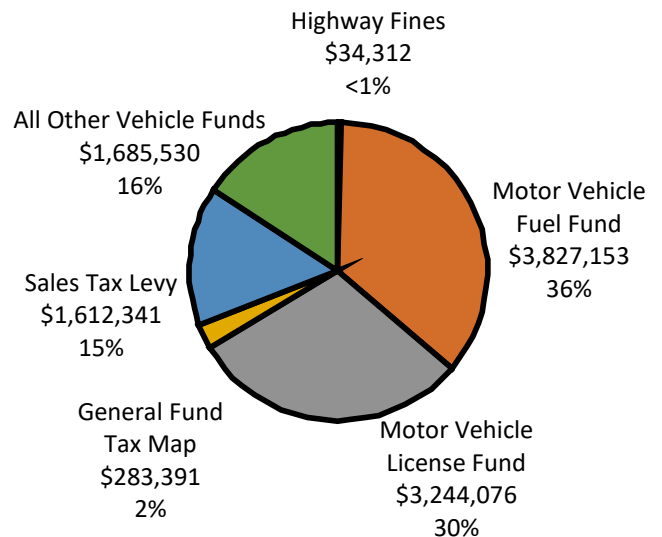
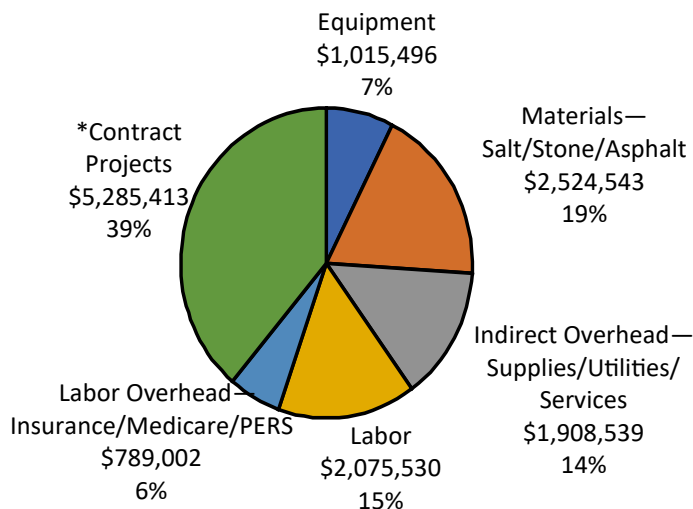
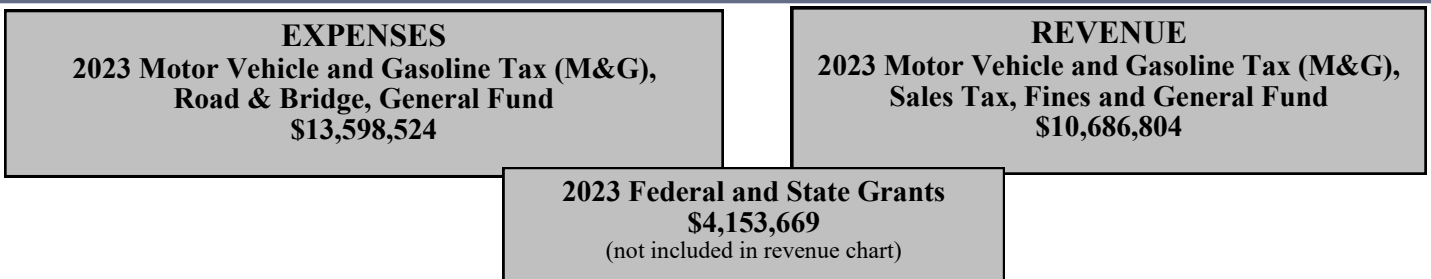
**Building Department**

P: (937) 645-3018

**Operations Facility**

P: (937) 645-3017

**Budget Breakdown**



All sales tax levy funds were used for contract projects in 2023

\*This expense value includes some contract projects completed in 2022 but paid in 2023