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MAY YOUR DAYS BE MERRY AND BRIGHT!

Our big green snowplows are a familiar sight this time of year, but the joyous season is celebrated across KCRC in many ways. From festive decorations and giving opportunities to lighting up our fleet for community parades, employees helped spread holiday cheer throughout our complexes and across the county!



Thank you to all the employees who donated to this year's gift drive!



Take a tour
through the
administrative
building's holiday
workspaces.

Finance Department's Workspace Competition entry



(Left to Right) Courtney Snyder, Erik Easterly, Dominic Merlington and Vanessa Culver in holiday spirit!



*Justin Drier at
Southwest Complex*



North Complex



The Austhof brothers and their children at the Lowell Santa Parade.





TOWNSHIP DINNER



Jerry Byrne presenting



Representing KCRC



GVSU Prof Rob Larson, KCRC's Jerry Byrne, Vergennes Township Supervisor Tim Wittenbach



Kent County Board Chair Ben Greene and KCRC Board Chair Rob VerHeulen

KCRC held its annual Township Dinner in November, welcoming state, county, and township partners from across Kent County. During the event, Managing Director Jerry Byrne provided a review of the 2025 construction season and shared an update on the recently passed state transportation funding package. He thanked townships for their continued partnership and recognized state legislators and their staff for securing a historic and much-needed investment in Michigan's transportation system, an important step forward made possible through strong collaboration.

As the new revenue structure takes effect, road agencies across the state are working through a transition period. While the long-term benefits of the funding package are clear, the loss of approximately \$600 million in income tax revenue is creating short-term pressures for agencies, particularly smaller, rural county road commissions. As the second-largest road commission in the state, KCRC is well positioned to navigate this transition, supported by strong financial planning, fund balances, and a diverse mix of revenue sources. This allows KCRC to continue delivering uninterrupted services and prepare for future improvements.

At the same time, some agencies with fewer resources feel these changes more immediately, especially while maintaining winter operations. As CRA President, Jerry continues outreach with road agencies across Michigan and with legislators to keep conversations open and explore near-term options to support agencies during the transition.

KCRC's 2026 Budget and Annual Update can be found under the "Financial Documents" section of kentcountyroads.net, or by scanning:



EMPLOYEE LUNCHEONS



Employee thank-you luncheons marked the end of another successful construction season. We'd suggest a winter break, but the snow has other plans!

DRIVE LIKE YOUR FAMILY WORKS HERE



Drivers from South Complex joined their families for our *Drive Like Your Family Works Here* campaign. Scan to watch the video!



HOW TO USE A QR CODE

1. Open the camera app on your phone
2. Focus on the QR code
3. Click the link that pops up and go to the website





KCRC TAKES INNOVATIVE REHABILITATION APPROACHES TO AGING BRIDGES



KCRC's Wayne Harrall, Erik Easterly and Mike TenBrock with representatives from MDOT and the Federal Highway Administration

Throughout the state of Michigan, counties are facing the challenge of aging bridges. KCRC manages nearly 170 bridges within its network in Kent County, many of which are approaching the end of their life cycle. The rise in aging infrastructure, high contractor costs and limited funding have made preserving existing assets increasingly difficult. By developing a highly skilled maintenance crew and employing innovative bridge rehabilitation approaches, KCRC has been collaborating with agencies across the state to uphold its commitment to being fiscally responsible while maintaining its network.

"The projects that are needed to replace these structures are more expensive than they've ever been before. With the funding that all of us have, it's just not enough money to be able to afford all of those replacements all at once. So, it's especially important that we find ways to spend less money, extend the life and utilize the parts of those assets that really do

have some life left in them," said Erik Easterly, KCRC's Director of Engineering.

As part of efforts to mitigate the growing issue of aging infrastructure, KCRC's engineering and maintenance divisions have been working together to take unique rehabilitation approaches to bridges across its network in Kent County. These approaches involve building up the maintenance crew to be able to do smaller innovative projects to fix existing problems in lieu of replacing the assets entirely. Rehabilitating these bridges provides an opportunity to extend their lives at a fraction of the cost of full reconstruction. By developing maintenance crews highly skilled at rehabilitative bridge work, KCRC is able to rely less on external bridge contractors whose prices continue to rise as the need for bridge work across the state climbs.

"There is a greater need for bridge work than ever before but only a finite number of bridge contractors meaning higher prices," Erik said.

"Our own maintenance crew working on bridges here at Kent County Road Commission is something I'm very excited about."

Last month, KCRC presented on these rehabilitation projects to representatives from the Michigan Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, other industry partners and local agencies at the State Transportation Innovation meeting. Each year Kent County Road Commission attends similar events, getting the word out about new approaches and learning from peers. Through this collaboration, agencies are able to work together statewide to brainstorm more fiscally responsible solutions to the issue of aging infrastructure.

"If we can lead the state, lead the industry and help teach each other, it adds another element to our job as public servants here," says Erik.



Learn more! Scan the QR code to watch the full interview!



DEER MANAGEMENT REPORT RELEASED



In late November, the Kent County Deer Management Coalition released the Kent County County-wide Deer Management Recommendations, a data-driven report developed by Grand Valley State University following a yearlong study of the county's white-tailed deer population. KCRC is a founding member of the Coalition, with a focus on how managing a healthy deer herd can improve roadway safety.

The study provides a clear picture of how deer densities vary across Kent County and what those differences mean for public safety, habitat and the day-to-day experiences of residents. The recommendations offer a framework local government can use to consider management strategies that fit their communities while contributing to a coordinated countywide effort.

Those interested in learning more can view the full report and executive summary at kentcountymi.gov/deer.

DOE POLE

Following the report's release, KCRC supported the Farm Bureau of Kent County's Doe Pole. This hunting event, held on December 13, encouraged the harvest of does rather than bucks to support a healthy herd. Hunters could choose to donate harvested deer, with sponsors covering processing costs. The venison is to be distributed to local food assistance programs, reinforcing the report's emphasis on ethical utilization and community benefit.

KCRC HOSTS THE SNOWPLOW ROADEO FOR THE FIRST TIME



(Left to Right) KCRC's Eddie Smith, Jody Flipse and Steve Roon, Maintenance Director

For the first time in the event's history, KCRC hosted the APWA Midwest Michigan Snowplow Roadeo and Equipment Show, welcoming drivers and public works teams for a day of friendly competition and hands-on training to prepare for the winter season. The Snowplow Roadeo began in 1984 as a training event hosted by the City of Wyoming and has since grown to welcome teams from across the region. Congratulations to Jody Flipse (Central Complex), who earned first place in the individual driving competition. Jody teamed with Eddie Smith to place second in team driving, with East Grand Rapids taking first.



CHEERS TO NEW CHAPTERS: RECOGNIZING CAREER ACHIEVEMENTS

As we close out another successful season, we take a moment to celebrate the incredible dedication and achievements within our team. Join us in honoring those retiring after years of service and congratulating colleagues stepping into exciting new roles. Your hard work and commitment make all the difference!

RETIREMENT HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR



Joe Kaltz
Assistant Project Engineer
21 Years of Service



Karen Luneke
Executive Secretary
48 Years of Service



Wayne Harrall
Deputy Managing Director
37 Years of Service



Gordy Pant
Driver at North Complex
31 Years of Service



Paul Brandt
Driver at North Complex
23 Years of Service



Lee J. Christensen
Driver at North Complex
32 Years of Service

CELEBRATING GROWTH: OUR 2025 PROMOTIONS

Sean McKean
Project Engineer
Engineering
June 2025

Ethan Veenstra
Asst. Project Engineer
Engineering
July 2025

Ethan Lamberson
Material Specialist I
Central Complex
July 2025

Joe Jansma
Material Specialist II
Central Complex
July 2025

Ken Bailey
Equipment Specialist II
Central Complex
August 2025

Glenn Fankhauser
Asst. District Superintendent
South Complex
October 2025

Phil Anderson Jr.
Asst. District Foreman
Southwest Complex
October 2025

Austin Bouwer
Foreman I
Central Complex
October 2025



WELCOME TO THE WORLD!*

Congratulations to all of the KCRC Families that welcomed a new addition this year!

*We understand that we may not catch every newborn arrival, so if you're expecting, we'd be thrilled to share in your joy when your little one arrives! Please inform HR, and we'll make sure to spread the good news!

We are pleased to announce the arrival of Lily Anne Potter, daughter of Malachi Potter, Driver at Central Complex. Lily made her appearance on November 12th, 2025, at 8lbs and 20 inches.



We are pleased to announce the arrival of Jeb Joseph Sharp-Castillo, son of Joe Castillo, Engineering Technician I. Jeb made his appearance on November 17th, 2025, at 6lbs 15oz.



We are pleased to announce the arrival of Elloise Grace Wisnewski, daughter of Jimmy Wisnewski, Driver at Southwest Complex. Elloise made her appearance on November 28th, 2025, at 8lbs, 8oz and 20 inches.



HUNTERS' HALL OF FAME: SHOWCASING YOUR SUCCESS



Darius Benjamin
Driver - SW Complex



Andrew & Amber Reinhart
Environmental Specialist



Beth Nanzer
HR Generalist



Ethan Veenstra
Asst. Project Engineer



Olivia and Molly Morgan
Commissioner Roger Morgan's
granddaughters



Pat Thompson
Superintendent - Central
Complex



Tom Murphy
Senior Safety Patrol
Foreman



John Lastocy Jr.
Driver - Central Complex



HR CORNER

Did you go through any of the following life events or status changes?

- Marriage/Divorce
- Death of a spouse/child
- Birth/adoption of a child
- Voluntary/Spouse loss of employment
- Significant change in the cost of spouse's medical/dental coverage
- College student status

If so you are eligible to modify benefit enrollment elections within 30 days of the event.

If you need assistance doing so, please contact the HR department at (616)242-6979 or csnyder@kentcountyroads.net.



401K limit increases to \$24,500 in 2026, IRA limit increases to \$7,500

KCRC'S NEW TALENT WELCOMED IN 2025!

Erik Dubois Equip. Spec. I - Central	Muris Gafurovic Driver Apprentice - Central
Brendan Mohr Driver Apprentice - South	Chad Cross Driver Apprentice - South
Brandon Stull Driver Apprentice - South	Malachi Potter Driver Apprentice - Central
Eric Spoelman Driver Apprentice - Central	Connor Zandee Driver Apprentice - SW
Sheldon Campbell Driver Apprentice - Central	Steven Fegel Driver Apprentice - Central
Brody Minzey Driver Apprentice - Central	Shawn VanOveren Driver Apprentice - South
Zachary Macy Driver Apprentice - SW	Trevor Williams Driver Apprentice - South
Jevin VanderKodde Driver Apprentice - South	

HOW MONEY GOES INTO YOUR HSA

Make contributions through your paycheck and maximize your tax benefit.



Decide how much to contribute to your HSA.

Find your optimal contribution amount on Employee Navigator.



Set a recurring payroll election to HSA.

Funds conveniently come out of each paycheck, pretax, and are deposited into your HSA.



Make changes to your HSA as needed throughout the year.

Max out your contribution or change your contribution amount if unexpected expenses come up.



Kent County Road Commission

1900 4 MILE NW
WALKER, MI 49544

THANK YOU, KCRC!

“Thanks all for helping us get out and about.”

- Teri S

“We were very pleased on rural Kent County roads this morning. Great Job!”

- Ken S

“KCRC out there crushing it! Thank you!”

- Lisa B

“I just wanted to drop a note to say we as a community are very grateful. For as much snow as we got I was amazed how clean these roads are this early. We are very fortunate to have your whole team in the position they are in!! Thanks a bunch!”

- Local business owner

“THANK YOU so much for the brush removal today. You have made a bad intersection so much more visible and we appreciate all of your work.”

- Tim and Faith E

“Just wanted to say thanks for taking care of the safety issue with the flashing school zone light that was blocked by tree branches. I called yesterday and I went by at noon and your crews had taken care of it already. Fine job.”

-Craig H