

Winter Road Maintenance Franklin Township

Traffic safety is one of the core functions of the Franklin Township (FT) Board of Supervisors. Winter road maintenance is an essential element of our traffic safety program and it affects every resident in the township. Prior to 2014, FT was unable to consistently clear roads and provide safe driving conditions for our residents in a timely manner after a winter storm. Despite the township staff working tirelessly once a winter storm was upon FT, they were unable to consistently achieve the desired outcome of snow-free roads because they lacked a key element – a salt supply that was adequate and available without dependence on external resources. The time before an approaching storm was often chaotic, as the staff looked for salt supplies that could be delivered just before the storm. The salt was expensive and many times unavailable because larger municipalities and state governments commandeered the supply. Since there was no weather-protected storage area, large quantities of salt could not be procured at a more reasonable price prior to a storm.

In 2014, the Board approved a project to construct a 1000 ton salt storage facility. The construction was managed by FT board members and staff thus saving 20% of the project cost. The project estimate was \$250,000. Using effective cost control techniques, the project was completed for \$230,000 and delivered in time for the December 2014 winter storms.

Winter road maintenance is still a challenge because of the wide variation in winter storms, from thin frozen coatings to large snow accumulations. But the availability of salt is never a limiting factor. Salt is typically procured via a contract with a fixed price to be available for the next winter. The contract provides the ability to procure a minimum of 60% and a maximum of 140% of salt at the contract price, thus providing flexibility while managing costs.

Typically, the Township annually budgets \$260,000 for winter storms. The annual allowance is always an estimate because the number and severity of winter storms in any year is uncertain. Sometimes the budget is under spent and the excess is applied to major road maintenance projects that start in the spring. In some cases, costs exceed the budget and fewer resources are available for the subsequent road program.

The following photos describe conditions at the FT municipal site before and after the construction of the salt shed:

BEFORE

Prior to the availability of a salt shed, trucks loaded salt piled in the FT parking lot.



AFTER

With the 1000 ton salt storage shed completed in 2014, an adequate supply of salt is always available to maintain FT roadways during winter storms.

