

## HIGHWAY EXTENSION WORK

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More than twenty years ago Professor George E. Martin, at that time in charge of highway engineering work at Purdue University, inaugurated highway extension trips to various counties in the state to investigate county road-improvement procedures and to make helpful suggestions to the responsible county officials.

Since 1920 this extension work has been continued and expanded by the writer. To date, a total of 300 highway extension visits have been made to Indiana counties, during which each of the 92 counties has been visited from one to six times. In connection with these extension visits, a total of approximately 21,000 miles of local roads have been inspected and 360 road meetings have been held with a total attendance of over 16,000 persons.

During the inspection trips over the county roads with commissioners, road supervisors, surveyors, and occasionally other county officials, we are permitted to learn of the problems facing county road men and also to gain firsthand knowledge of materials, methods, equipment, etc., used in the various counties. The circumstances are propitious for us to offer suggestions aimed at increasing the efficiency and economy of county road improvement, and we find that in practically all cases the local officials welcome these suggestions.

As a rule, two meetings are held in each county, one a noon or evening meeting with one of the business and professional men's service clubs, or the Chamber of Commerce, and a night meeting primarily for the county road men themselves. Occasionally, joint dinner meetings are arranged, where the road men and the business and professional men can eat together and become better acquainted.

The county newspapers have been most co-operative in giving publicity to these extension visits and in devoting considerable space to the publication of prepared articles dealing with their local road problems. These visits usually result in very helpful publicity for county roads, and the reactions following these visits have in many cases been most helpful to the county road department.

These extension trips are usually made during the summer months, during which time it is possible to visit only 12 or 15 counties. It requires, therefore, six or seven years to make the rounds of the 92 counties. After a lapse of five or six years, we usually meet with an entirely new group of county road men, because of the rapid turnover in personnel. Thus,

there is a permanent need of continuing this type of extension work.

Supplementing these actual visits to the various counties, we have for the past ten years issued a monthly *Highway Extension News*, consisting of two mimeographed pages carrying short items of interest and of practical aid to both state and county road officials, which now has a mailing list of about 800. During the past year this has been supplemented by one or two pages of "Highway Hints" prepared by the staff of the Joint Highway Research Project at Purdue. Several copies are mailed to persons outside the state who have requested that their names be placed on the mailing list.

We feel that this extension work has been beneficial to us personally in keeping us in closer touch with the needs and progress of road work in Indiana, and through the additional opportunities of offering helpful suggestions where such suggestions are needed. These extension trips are made only on requests of county road officials and at no expense to the counties.