

Flint Journal Editorial: It's campaign season again in Genesee County - make sure you put up your signs correctly, says Flint Journal guest columnist John Daly

by John Daly | Flint Journal guest columnist

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As I drive about Genesee County lately assessing the progress of the county Road Commission's construction and maintenance projects, I have noticed an increase in the number of signs advertising sales, political candidates and other commercial activities starting to appear in the public road right of way. What people need to know is other than for highway travel purposes, any activity within, or use of, the right of way along roads under the jurisdiction of the Road Commission is subject to a review and permitting process. This review and permit process has been established to help ensure safe travel on county roads by discouraging those activities or objects that may create a hazard. The process also controls those activities that may interfere with road maintenance, snow removal, drainage or future road improvement projects. Permits will not usually be issued where a reasonable alternative exists. The commission reserves the right to remove, at the owner's expense, non-permitted items placed or constructed within the road right of way. Permitted activities include: new or modifications to existing driveways or roads to access the road system; utilities; tree/brush removal; seismographic exploration; and oversize load transport. Activities not permitted include: The placement of signs (including political signs), fences, retaining walls, sprinkler systems, landscaping rocks, berms, trees, shrubs, bushes, lighting, structures, septic tanks, drain fields, or wells. Mailboxes are allowed within the right of way without a permit but must be installed in a manner to minimize any traffic hazard. Property owners should consult their local post office for postal standards for installation regarding height and distance from the road. It is suggested, however, that the actual structure be a single mailbox installed on a single, "break away" post. To minimize the possibility of liability should an errant vehicle strike the structure, mailbox owners must resist the urge to reinforce or strengthen the post. Further information on mailboxes can be found at the Road Commission's Web site. The road right of way is generally 66 feet (33 feet on each side of the "centerline" of the road), but could be wider in certain locations. Before proceeding with any activity along a public road, people should contact the Road Commission. Everyone's cooperation will help keep our roadsides free of obstacles and hazards and ensure safer travel and more efficient maintenance on the county roads. John Daly is the manager director for the Genesee County Road Commission.